Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign

Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign

with special reference to Abu'l Fazl

(1556-1605)

by

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To the Memory of

Mrs. Khurshid Nuru'l Hasan
(1932-1967)

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ABBREVIATIONS

Names of the authors, full titles and other details may be consulted in the Bibliography.

A'in	*A'in i-Akbari*
'Arif	*Tarikh i-Akbari*
AA	*Akhbaru'l Akhyar*
AN	*Akbar Nama* by Shaikh Abu'l Fazl
Bev.	English translation of the *Akbar Nama* by H. Beveridge
Blochmann	English translation of the *A'in i-Akbari*, Vol.I.
BB	*Tazkira i-Humayun wa Akbar*
Commentary	*The Commentary* of Father Monserrate
Ethe	*Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the India Office*, 2 vols.
EI,new	*Enclelopaedia of Islam*, second edition.
EI,old	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, first edition.
FS	*Akbar Nama* by Faizi Sihrindi.
Haig	English translation of the *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh*, Vol. III.
HNG	*Humayun Nama* by Gulbadan Begum.
IC	*Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad (A.P., India)
Jarrett	English translation of the *A'in i-Akbari*, Vols. II and III.
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain.*
Lowe	English translation of the *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh*, Vol. II.
LF	*Lata'if i-Faiyazi*
MA	*Mukatbat i-'Allami*
MKBH	*Mughul Kalin Bharat—Humayun*
MRM	*Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*

MT	*Muntakhabu't Tawarikh*
NM	*Nafa'isu'l Ma'asir*
Ranking	English translation of the *Muntakhab'ut Tawarikh,* Vol. I.
Rieu	*Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3 vols. and supplement.
R & B	English translation of the *Tuzuk i-Jahangiri*
Tabaqat	*Tabaqat i-Akbari*
Tuzuk	*Tuzuk i-Jahangiri*
TA	*Tarikh i-Alfi*
TAS	*Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi*
UTKB	*Uttar Timur Kalin Bharat*
WM	*Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi*

PREFACE

This book offers a history of Islamic ideology in Northern India in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and attempts to explain the intellectual and religious tendencies then prominent in the light of their evolution during earlier centuries. Abu'l Fazl, his father Shaikh Mubarak, and his family were leading exponents of the new values which dominated politics, religion, society, and culture from about 1575 until the end of Akbar's reign, which continued potent influences until Aurangzeb's time and whose impress remains upon Indian life to this day. These men have therefore been given a central position in the treatment of those changing ideas and new movements, which were the hallmark of Akbar's age.

Source material of various categories has been analysed, and care taken to integrate historical sources with biographical material found elsewhere, so that the picture might be presented in its true perspective. But many of the sources (although rarely mentioned in modern historical works) have not been described in detail in my bibliography; C. A. Storey, in his monumental *Persian Literature, A Bio-Bibliographical Survey*, has admirably performed that task, and I have constantly referred to his work. Storey, however, has not included poetry, letters, or religious and mystic literature. For these I have referred to the descriptive catalogues of manuscripts in various collections, although in some cases the manuscripts I have actually consulted belonged to collections other than those mentioned in these catalogues. When this is so, I have noted the fact.

This book, in its original form, entitled *Abu'l Fazl and His Times*, was approved as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Agra in 1949. I began it in 1946, doing most of the work in the library of the University of Lucknow, as I was then an Instructor at the provincial government's Basic

Training Centre in that city. My holidays were spent in visiting libraries from Lahore to Calcutta, and from Rampur to Hyderabad; and thus I was able to examine all the important manuscript collections in India. I was permitted also to inspect some private collections then inaccessible to scholars, but now open to the public, such as those of Sir Salar Jang Bahadur of Hyderabad and Nauwab Sadryar Jang Bahadur of Habibganj in Aligarh.

Many works then still in manuscript have since been published. As far as I could, I have given references to the standard published editions. English translations, where available, have been used as a basis, but have invariably been checked against the original; my own versions have been used, wherever I have thought them more correct than the published translation. I have not given reasons in every case; but I have provided references both to the original text and the English translation as published, so that the curious may compare them, and come to their own conclusions.

The subject was first suggested to me by the late Professor Muhammad Habib and by Professor Shaikh 'Abdu'r Rashid, then both of Aligarh Muslim University. My supervisor was the late Professor Kali Shankar Bhatnagar of Sanatan Dharma College, Cawnpore (Kanpur), one of the principal postgraduate colleges of Agra University, now part of Kanpur University. Through his generous encouragement to develop my thesis as I wished, and with the occasional guidance of Professors Habib and Rashid, I was able to finish the work in three years. Professor Bhatnagar was a cultured and liberal kayastha of the old school; he was also a disciple of a Naqshbandi saint, of the school of Mirza Jan Janan Mazhar (*c.* 1698-1781) and therefore felt some slight concern at the appendix I had written about Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi's revivalist movement. Professor Bhatnagar's veneration for his preceptor was profound; indeed, at his preceptor's command, he rejected the often-offered Principalship of the College, and the financial ease and independence it would have brought him, as beyond the needs of a simple teacher. To his preceptor, then, he submitted my appendix; and, to the surprise of both of us, the saint said that it might be retained, and even published, in the form in which it then stood, despite its unconventional judgement of his famous Naqshbandi predecessor. This appendix, elaborated and expanded, was submitted to the University of Agra as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Letters, and was published by it in 1965.

In 1949, I was appointed a Lecturer in History at the Aligarh Muslim University. There, under the influence of Dr Zakir Husain, then Vice-Chancellor, I plunged into the study of Hindi, and spent several years translating into that language Persian and Arabic sources for mediaeval Indian history. I became in 1957 Secretary of a body set up by the government of U. P. to publish the source material of the History of the Freedom Movement (1857-1947) in those provinces, and concentrated for several years upon modern Indian history. Thus it was only in 1966, when I joined the Australian National University in Canberra, that I was able to undertake the revision of *Abu'l Fazl and his Times* for publication. I had acquired further material, gathered from various libraries in India, Europe, and the Middle East since 1949; since then, too, many new works had been published, both on mediaeval India and on Indian Islam. These have all been examined, and the sources I had originally used have been reviewed; in this, I was materially helped by a Senior Research Fellowship given me by the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, which allowed me to spend nearly six months in London in 1969. A slight delay has intervened, caused by the publication of *Alakh Bani*, and other papers; but the book is now complete, and I feel that I have discharged a duty to many, in India and elsewhere, who regard the government of Akbar's time as ideal and look upon Abu'l Fazl as a model of harmony and calm good sense. The inclusion of a great deal of further research which I have done in recent years has led to the substitution of a new title which better reflects the enlarged scope of the work in its final form.

In re-writing this work in its present form, I have been greatly assisted by my friend and colleague, Mr V. J. A. Flynn, who is himself engaged in translating the *Adab i-'Alamgir-i* of Aurangzeb. In addition to offering valuable comments, he has re-worked the drafts, and corrected them, to make the book more readable for Western scholars. In this latter task, Miss Mary Hutchinson has also helped me. Several chapters have been read through by Professor A. L. Basham, who has given me eminently sound advice. The views expressed, however, and any defects in their presentation, are my entire responsibility.

The work of typing, done with great patience by Mrs L. Olive, Mrs R. Rush and Mrs L. Rowlands, was supervised by Mrs J. Bergin and Miss J.Knox, all of the Australian National University's staff. Adetailed transliteration scheme was intended, but I had to allow this ambition to be thwarted in the interests of speedy printing. However, this much was possible: (,) indicates *hamza* and (') indicates *ain*. I am extremely grateful to Mr. Devendra Jain of Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., not only for publishing the book, but also for taking upon himself the entire responsibility of such an arduous task as correcting the proofs. This has been done under his personal supervision. Had the proofs been corrected by me in Canberra, publication of this book would have been greatly delayed.

I also express my gratefulness to the manager and staff of Delhi Press, for their patience in the printing. of the book.

To all those I have mentioned, and to others who have helped me, I offer my sincere thanks. To all of them, I am deeply indebted.

My great source of inspiration, while engaged in other academic pursuits during the 'fifties and 'sixties, was that brilliant scholar of mediaeval Indian history, Mrs. Khurshid Nuru'l Hasan, whom I first met in 1949, and who later became Professor of History at the Barahseni Post-graduate Degree College, Aligarh. She frequently urged me to publish *Abu'l Fazl and his Times*, and though I could not then comply with her desire, I never forgot it. She has not lived, alas, to see it fulfilled; she died suddenly in Srinagar on 16 June, 1967. Unable now to dedicate my work to her, I offer it to her memory.

S.A.A. Rizvi

The Australian National University,
Canberra
February 27, 1975.

CHAPTER 1

ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES

(Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries)

The complex religious tensions and ideological conflicts which confronted Akbar (1556-1605) and such supporters as Abu'l Fazl and others of new intellectual and political leadership which for brevity and convenience we style "the elite," were not, as some naively imagine, their creation. The root of the trouble was the inability of the Delhi Sultans (1206-1526) to view society as an organic whole. They offered piecemeal and temporary solutions to all problems with a view to averting imminent crises; rulers such as Balban (1246-1266), 'Ala'u'd Din Khalji (1296-1315) and Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-1351) were, nevertheless, able and vigorous and effectively asserted against various divisive forces their right to establish a strong government. The framework of political rights and duties which they readily imposed upon themselves was the creation of the Turkic Sultans who had ruled Khurasan and Central Asia until the Mongol cataclysm of the 1220's, enjoying the blessing of outstanding Sunni 'alims such as Imam Ghazali (1058-1111) of Tus in Khurasan.

In the first twenty years of his reign, Akbar made serious departures from the traditional Sunni system of government, but his deference towards the leading orthodox Sunni personalities prevented any overt breach. He gave them full and independent control over religious affairs, and they were only too happy to use their power in any way their interpretation of Sunni orthodoxy permitted.

But Akbar's growing awareness of the repercussions of the traditional orthodox Sunni dominance over his administration had impelled him by 1570's to an active search for new solutions. He therefore encouraged the emergence of a new elite group, whose spokesman was Abu'l Fazl. We shall, therefore, review in the following pages religious and political challenges as they presented themselves before Abu'l Fazl entered Court in 1575.

The Sunnis and the Shi'is

Muslims are divided into two major sects : the Sunnis and the Shi'is. The Sunnis, who are the overwhelming majority, believe that the Prophet Muhammad did not nominate anyone to succeed him, and that after his death, in June 632, the leading members of the community elected as his successor his most intimate friend and ardent supporter Abu Bakr, (632-634) who came to be designated as the *Khalifah* ("Caliph"). He was succeeded in turn by 'Umar I (634-644), 'Usman (644-656) and 'Ali (656-661). The period of their rule is called the *khilafat i-rashida* ("the rightly guided Caliphate"). After them came the Umaiyads, (661-750) who made Damascus their capital. They were eventually replaced by the 'Abbasids (750-1258).

The Shi'is, unlike the Sunnis, believe that succession to Muhammad, "*Imamat*" as they call it, rightly belonged to Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, 'Ali, and his descendants by his wife, Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad. According to them, Muhammad had by divine command proclaimed 'Ali as his successor. This event took place at Ghadir-Khumm, a pool on the left side of the road from Mecca to Medina, while he was returning from what is known as his Farewell Pilgrimage (10/632). Shi'is believe that their imams were immaculate and knew the hidden as well as the apparent meaning of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad's commands and actions. Sunnis do not attach any such importance to the Caliphs whose function was the protection and maintenance of the *umma* (Islamic community) and the territory of Islam. A Caliph's privileges included the mention of his name in the Friday *khutbah* ("sermon") and on the coinage.

Both Sunnis and Shi'is believe that the main sources of the Sacred Law ("the *shari'a*) are the Qur'an and *hadis*, but Shi'is regard as valid only those traditions which are attributed to 'Ali or his successors (the *Imams*). The corpus of Shi'i *hadis* is ascribed to their sixth Imam, Ja'far al-Sadiq (died 148/765). The collection of sunni *hadises* was made by six different ninth-century scholars : their works are known as the six canonical books, the most authoritative of which is that of Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari (810-70). In order to cover all cases—civil, criminal, political, financial—the Sunnis had to have recourse to two new principles: *qiyas* or analogical deduction, and *ijma'* i.e. the agreement of the religious elite to their jurisprudence. The four orthodox schools which thereupon evolved are known as Hanafi,[1] Maliki,[2] Shafi'i[3] and Hanbali,[4] and their founders are regarded as great *mujtahids*.[5]

The vast Sunni empire of the Umayyads was strongly challenged by the Shi'is, and as a result of their well-organised efforts the Umayyad dynasty was finally overthrown and the 'Abbasids came to power. But discarding their Shi'i supporters, soon became ruthless persecutors of Shi'ism. The 'Abbasids also lost many provinces earlier ruled by the Umayyads. The first to go was far-off Spain where an Umayyad caliphate was established in 756. A Shi'i dynasty, known as the Idrisids, formed a kingdom in al-Maghrib (Morocco) in 788. The most important Shi'i rulers were, however, the Fatimids of Egypt, (909-1160) a dynasty founded by 'Ubaidu'llah al-Mahdi (909-934), whose successors extended their rule over all African territory from the border of Morocco of the Idrisids to the furthest borders of Egypt.

The founders of the new dynasties in the West were mainly of Arab origin, but the 'Abbasid Caliphate in the East was dismembered by the Shi'i Persians and the Sunni Turks. Of the Turkic dynasties, the most important were the Ghazanavids (977-1137) and the Saljuqs (1038-1151). Mahmud (999-1030), the most outstanding ruler of the Ghaznavid dynasty, annexed the Punjab and Sind to the eastern part of his empire. He defeated the Shi'i Buyids (945-1055) of Persian Iraq, and, as an enthusiastic Sunnite, acknowledged the suzerainty of the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Qadir (991-1031) from whom he received the title of Yaminu'd Daula ("The Right Hand of the Empire"). The rulers of the provincial dynasties of Iran were known as Sultans and yearned for recognition of their rule by the 'Abbasid Caliphs for strictly worldly reasons : to enhance their prestige in the Sunnite world, and to justify crushing rivals.

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[1] Sunnis who follow the teachings and principles of the school of jurisprudence founded by Abu Hanifa (*c.* 699-767). The majority of Sunnis in India and Pakistan are Hanafis.

[2] Named after Malik b. Anas, (*c.* 715-95); the Sunnis throughout northern Africa, with the exception of those in Lower Egypt and in Eastern Arabia are the Malikites.

[3] Imam Abu 'Abdu'llah Muhammad bin Idris (767-820), was the founder of the Shafi'i school. It is predominant in the Malay Archipelago. Some Sunnis of Bangla Desh follow the Shafi'i school.

[4] The adherents of the school of Ahmad b. Hanbal, (780-855).

[5] A *mujtahid*, (the opposite of *muqallid*—"imitator") is an authority who exercises his own *ijtihad* or judgment in order to reach a legal decision (*hukm*).

The empire of Mahmud did not last for long, although his dynasty ruled Lahore down to 1187, when it was conquered by the *Ghurids*. Another Sunni power of far-reaching importance was that of the Saljuq Turks, whose rise in the eastern Iran ushered in a new era of progress and prosperity for the Sunnis. Secretaries such as Nizamu'l Mulk[1] Tusi, (*c.* 1018-1092) and the 'ulama such as Abu Hamid Muhammad Ghazali (1058-1111), legitimised their rule by asserting that the Saljuq Sultanate was a separate institution from the Caliphate, and by regarding the Sultan as a shadow of God upon earth. The old *iqta'* system, whereby the revenue from provinces and regions was assigned to the military chiefs provided a firm financial basis for the consolidation and extension of their conquests. The main problem, however, was to find an equally strong group of Sunnis to run the civil government. Emphasising the importance of this, Nizamu'l Mulk says:

> In the days of Mahmud, Mas'ud (1030-1041), Tughril (1038-1063), and Alp Arslan (1063-1073) [may Allah have mercy on them] no Zoroastrian or Jew or Rafizi (Shi'i) would have the audacity to appear in a public place or to present himself before a great man. Those who administered the affairs of the Turks were all professional civil servants and secretaries from Khurasan, who belonged to the orthodox Hanafi or Shafi'i sects. The heretics of Iraq were never admitted as secretaries and tax-collectors : in fact the Turks never used to employ them at all;

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[1] Nizamu'l Mulk Tusi (born *c.* 1018) the minister of the Saljuqid Sultans Alp Arslan and Malik Shah I (1073-1092), and the celebrated author of the *Siyasat Nama*, was assassinated on 14 October 1092 by an Isma'ili disguised in a sufi dress. The *Siyasat Nama*, comprising political counsels buttressed by historical anecdotes, was written in 1091 at Malik Shah's request. The work was intended to arouse Sunni hatred against the Isma'ilis, and to awaken men to their alleged threat to the Sunni world; and to serve as an "Islamic Mirror" for Princes.

they said, 'these men are of the same religion as the Dailamites[1] and their supporters; if they get a firm footing they will injure the interests of the Turks and cause distress to the Muslims. It is better that enemies should not be in our midst.' Consequently they lived free from disaster. Now things have reached such a state that the court and the *diwan*[2] are full of them, and every Turk has ten or twenty of these individuals running after him, and their object is to prevent even a few Khurasanis from entering the service of this court and earning a living here. One day the Turks will realize the iniquity of these people and recall my words, when the *diwans* become empty of Khurasani secretaries and officials."[3]

In fact the number of the Shi'i scholars produced by the al-Azhar academy founded by the Fatimid Caliph al-'Aziz (975-996) in Cairo and those emerging from other Shi'i seminaries far exceeded the number of the Sunni 'ulama'[4] turned out by Sunni seminaries in Baghdad and elsewhere. In order to cope with the situation Nizamu'l Mulk founded *madrasas* ("seminaries of higher Sunnite learning") in all the important cities of Iraq and Iran for training scholars in the Sunni system of *Kalam* ("dialectic") created by Abu'l Hasan 'Ali al-Ash'ari (260-324/873-936) and popularised by Ghazali. The 'ulama produced by the madrasas set up by Nizamu'l Mulk filled the important civil posts in the state and opposed all challenges to Sunni orthodoxy. The further multiplication of *madrasas*, for they continued to be established both by the subsequent Turkic rulers and by their state dignitaries, ensured that the movement to cleanse the state of all non-Sunni elements was a great success.

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[1] Dailamites originally belonged to the highlands of Gilan, where the 'Alids, persecuted by the 'Abbasids, took refuge and found support. They fought many battles against the 'Abbasid Caliphs and became the bulwark of the strength of the Buyids who in 946 occupied Baghdad and held Caliph under their tutelage for 109 years. *EI*, new, II, pp. 189-193.

[2] *Diwan* ("chancery") was concerned mainly with the civil administration; under the Saljuqs the principal *diwans* were the *diwanu'l insha wa'l tughra* (sometimes known as the *diwan i-rasa'il*) which dealt with incoming and outgoing correspondence, and the *diwan al-zimam wa'l istifa* (also known as the *diwan i-ishraf*) which dealt with financial affairs (*EI*, new, II, pp. 330-335).

[3] Hubert Darke, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings* (London, 1960), pp. 164-165.

[4] The plural form of 'alim; the primary meaning is, one who possesses knowledge. The word's technical significance is a scholar of Islamic learning, theology and canon law. 'Ulama were both independent scholars and government servants; starving *'alims* given to study and affluent ones drawing huge salaries.

Since the 'ulama were generally government servants, the Sultans exploited their religious prestige to their own advantage, and used them as a counterpoise against ambitious military adventurers. But although the 'ulama issued *fatwas* ("a judicial sentence") declaring that rebellion or opposition to the ruling authority was an abominable sin, not all of them were loyal to their rulers. Ambitious 'ulama did in fact join with the military leaders in plots to replace strong monarchs by their own puppets. Many monarchs were able to overcome such situations only by drawing upon the support of the sufis. No sultan could wield power success fully unless he was able to balance the interests of the 'ulama, of the sufis and of the military leaders; the three categories which formed the main pressure groups.

The Delhi Sultanate, established in the early thirteenth century was ruled by the Hanafite Sunnis, but that turbulent period of increasing stress and strain for the Turkic tribes was marked by a process of general decay of their power in Iran, Central Asia and Ghazni. In 607/1210 Sultan Shamsu'd Din Iltutmish[1] (1210-1235) ascended the throne of Delhi. His vigilance, statesmanship and ability to control the restless Turkic pressure groups[2] ensured him success over his rivals at Ghazni[3] and Multan.[4] On 22 Rabi'I 626/18 February 1229 the emissaries of the 'Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad invested him with the title of Nasir Amiru'l-Mu'minin and formally recognized his conquest, as a part of the 'Abbasid Caliphate.[1] The peace and prosperity of the Delhi Sultanate afforded asylum to statesmen, soldiers of fortune, scholars. 'ulama and the sufis from many parts of the Islamic world that were seized with dynastic instability and the threats of Mongol invasions.

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[1] Although the rule of the Sultans starts from Qutbu'd Din Aibak (1206-1210); Iltutmish, who replaced Aibak's son Aram Shah, was the real founder of the Delhi Sultanate.

[2] They were mainly Mu'izzi *amirs*, some of whom openly supported Qutbu'd Din Aibak's son Aram Shah. A number of others also revolted from time to time but Iltutmish invariably crushed them. [Minhaj Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat i-Nasiri* (Calcutta, 1864), pp. 170-71]

[3] Taju'd Din Yalduz to whom Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Mahmud had assigned Ghazni, considered himself a legitimate overlord of the Indian empire of the Ghaznavids. He was defeated and killed in 1215-16.

[4] Nasiru'd Din Qubacha, who was assigned Multan by Sultan Mu 'izzu'd Din, was a strong rival of Iltutmish. He was finally defeated in May 1228 and committed suicide.

Iltutmish canalised the talents of the immigrants in order to strengthen the military and administrative framework of his Sultanate, but immediately after his death the facade of unity and solidarity presented by the Delhi Sultanate disintegrated and the enterprising and adventurers among them became the leaders of different groups, drawing support generally from members of their own race and often combining with other groups. By the end of the thirteenth century the ever-increasing influx of adventurers of non-Turkic racial groups, and the Islamisation of many Hindu tribal leaders and chieftains, together with the Islamisation of the Mongols, made political and social problems exceedingly complex. The ruthlessness of Sultans such as Balban (1266-1287) and 'Ala'u'd Din (1296-1316) temporarily succeeded in mitigating the tension. Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-1351) introduced several schemes for overcoming tension, but none succeeded, and even in his lifetime the vast Sultanate carved out by 'Ala'u'd Din was disintegrating. Religious tension, and the conflicting demands of the pious orthodox, aggravated the political and racial crises. Of all the various targets of orthodox fury, the Isma'ilis and the philosophers were singled out for the most vigorous assault.

The Isma'ilis

The Isma'ilis are a branch of the Shi'is who believe that the successors of Isma'il, the son of Ja'far Sadiq, who was the sixth Imam of the Shi'is were the rightful successors to 'Ali. According to them, Isma'il was the seventh Imam, who was to return on the Last Day; this doctrine is responsible for the name "Sevener" given to them by orientalists. The real names of the Imams who flourished between the time of Muhammad, son of Isma'il and 'Ubaidu'llah al-Mahdi, the founder of the Fatimid dynasty of

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[1] *Tabaqat i-Nasiri*, p. 174.

Egypt, were kept strictly secret and a lot of confusion and uncertainty exists about them.

The success of the movement depended upon a hierarchy of propagandists from the Imam down to the *da'is* ("those who summon") each of the latter being responsible for propagating Ismailism in the special district assigned to him. Except in the areas where the Imam himself ruled, the *da'is* worked secretly. Their doctrine of the *batin*[1] ("hidden or esoteric meaning") and *ta'wil* ("esoteric exegesis") helped them to meet every situation and challenge with success. They asserted that all sacred texts had a *zahir* ("literal") and a *batin* meaning; and that the highest spiritual stage lay in discovering the real or esoteric meaning of all religious works. The same principle was also applied to scriptures of other faiths, and non-Muslims were converted to Ismailism when the *da'is* and their associates pointed out the inner meaning of their own sacred literature.

The help offered by the Fatimid caliphate towards spreading the *Isma'ili* doctrine was of far-reaching importance. Hodgson says:

> "Benevolent to the trade guilds : tolerant of Sunnis, of Christians and Jews, and of variety of opinion generally; with a sway ranging from the Atlantic to the borders of Iraq, with such command of the sea that its rule was accepted in Sicily and in Sind, the *Isma'ili* Caliphate at Cairo consciously rivalled in magnificence the united Caliphate of early Islam. From Egypt the *da'is* with continued eagerness spread in the remaining parts of the Muslim territories the hope of a renewal of united Muslim power, with at last a perfect justice and prosperity, under the house of the Prophet; which would then proceed to conquer for Islam the remaining strongholds of the infidels, in Europe and in the world."[2]

With same zeal as described above, *Isma'ilis* began to infiltrate Sind in the early tenth century. In 977 they seized Multan by a *coup d 'etat;* later they annexed Mansura, (Brahmanabad near modern Haidarabad in Pakistan). In 1004 Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni crushed their power, but they regained their former possessions under his weak successors. The conquests of Sultan Mu'izzu'd Din Muhammad bin Sam (d. 1206) shattered their material glory and they fell back upon their missionary activities. Their powers of readjustment to adverse circumstances, and readiness to compromise with different creeds, offered a greater challenge to the Sunni world than their princely possessions had done. Their doctrines of *batin* and *ta'wil* helped them to present Buddhist and Hindu religious symbols in an acceptable form by absorbing them into the framework of their own religious system. They also mixed with the Sunni population as orthodox Sunnis, while secretly preparing the ground for the propagation of their own creed.

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[1] From this word the Isma'ilis are given the name of Batiniyya.

[2] Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins* (The Hague, 1955), pp. 12-13.

The accession of Raziyya (1236-1240) provided them with a new weapon. Their leader, Nur Turk, called Maulana Nur Turk[1] in the mystic literature, was a man of learning and piety. He attracted large audiences by his *Tazkirs* ("sermons") on unworldliness and asceticism, which made him a favourite with the dominant Sunni group of Chishti saints in Delhi.[2] The latter, like all sunnis, hated the Isma'ilis, but Nur Turk does not seem to have revealed his true beliefs, although impressing his audience with the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an and orthodox Islamic teachings.

In alliance with the sufis and 'ulama not in government service, Nur Turk launched a movement against rule by a woman and against Raziyya's supporters, mainly Hanafi and Shafi'i 'ulama associated with the court. Isma'ilis[3] from Sind and Gujarat migrated to Delhi, to help make a final bid against the Sunni Sultanate. Raziyya now tried to win Nur Turk over by sending a large gift of gold to him; but he scornfully rejected it,[4] an action which increased his reputation for asceticism. In march 1237, one thousand of his followers attacked the Muslims in the jami 'mosque of Delhi but were beaten back, and the failure of this revolt shattered their hopes of overthrowing the Delhi Sultanate by armed insurrection. Many of the sect left again for Gujarat and Sind, where some of their co-

[1] Amir Hasan, *Fawa'idu'l Fuwad* (Buland Shahr, 1855-56), pp. 204, 212.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 212-213.

[3] *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, p. 189.

[4] *Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, p. 213.

religionists from Iran joined them after the Mongol destruction, in 654/1256, of Alamut,[1] in the mountain-fortress north-west of Qazwin. Nur Turk himself left Delhi for Mecca and continued to live austere but peaceful life there.[2]

In Delhi, the movement was crushed but not uprooted. *Taqiya* ("religious dissimulation") which permitted a Shi'i to pretend to be a Sunni in order to escape persecution, being a cardinal feature of their beliefs, the Isma'ilis lived among the Sunnis undetected. The works of Amir Khusrau,[3] 'Isami[4] and Barani, and the *Futuhat i-Firuz Shahi,* all written in the fourteenth century, adequately reflect the tension that the presence of the Isma'ilis generated in society. But what is most remarkable is the lack of precise information about them at that time. Persecution on the basis of rumours and uncertainty often led to the harassment of innocent people. In fact it was an effective weapon in the hands of the 'ulama, who were struggling for their own supremacy.

The Philosophers

The Falasifa ("Philosophers") were Muslim thinkers who based their ideas upon the Aristotelian, Platonic or neo-Platonic philosophies which were translated from Greek into Arabic between the ninth and the eleventh centuries. These translations were not made at the instigation of the 'ulama, but in spite of the 'ulama, following instead the lead given by the Bayt-al-Hikma ("the House of Wisdom") founded by the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Ma' mun (813-833). Modern Muslims take a great pride in their philosophical heritage, but it was never integrated into the body politic of orthodox Sunni or Shi'i Islam. It was regarded as being in a different category from positive religion. The celebrated mystic Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240) says that religion is based on the law of Muhammad, whereas the philosophers' trend of thought follows Hermetic traditions.[5]

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[1] It was the headquarters of the Nizari Isma'ilis who held territories from Syria to eastern Iran.

[2] *Fawa'idu'l Fuwad,* p. 213.

[3] Amir Khusrau, *Khaza'inu'l Futuh* (Calcutta, 1953), p. 20.

[4] 'Isami, *Futuhu's Salatin* (Madras, 1948), p. 301. The author claims that Sultan 'Ala'u'd-Din annihilated the Borah Isma'ilis.

[5] Henry Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital,* translated by W.R. Trask (Paris, 1954), p. 14.

The original contribution made by the Falasifa started with al-Kindi (*c.* 801-873), reached its highest point of glory with the works of al-Farabi (870-950) and Ibn Sina or Avicenna (980-1037). The *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* ("Epistles of the Brethren of Purity") the great encyclopaedia of philosophy and religion, written by Isma'ili missionaries between tenth and eleventh century, also made a singular contribution to the development of philosophy. The works of Avicenna embraced a wide field including the philosophy of the Peripatetic School, ontology, cosmology, psychology, the natural and mathematical sciences, psychology, religion, revelation and esoteric philosophy.

Pitted against such philosophy was the *kalam* of al-Ash'ari, which met the need for an official theology by the rulers of Sunni Islam. It sought to refute the philosophers with the same vigour it exhibited in fighting against the onslaught of the Isma'ilis.

Al-Ghazali who completed in all its aspects the works commenced by al-Ash'ari, utilized his immense prestige to counteract the influence of Avicenna and his followers. He wrote a work entitled *Tahafut al-Falasifa* ("The Incoherence of the philosophers") in which he strongly refuted their belief in the eternity of the world and their views on the nature of God. He concluded his work with the remark that philosophers were guilty of infidelity, for the following reasons:

(a) their belief in the eternity of the world, as they maintain that all substances are eternal;
(b) their assertion that divine knowledge does not encompass individual objects;
(c) their denial of the resurrection of the body.[1]

He further urged, that all these three theories were in direct opposition to Islam. To believe in them was to accuse the prophets of falsehood, and to regard their teachings as hypocritical misrepresentation designed to appeal to the masses; and this was blatant blasphemy to which no Muslim sect would subscribe.[2] In his autobiography also, Ghazali denounced the Muslim followers of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle as unbelievers. Indeed he maintained that faith based only upon intellect ('aql) was shakeable, while faith based upon intuition *(zauq)* was firm.[1]

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[1] Ghazali, *Tuhafut al-Falasifah* (Egypt, 1958, 3rd edition), p. 29.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 305-6.

Ghazali's refutation of philosophy did not fail to bear fruit; it went far to expand Ash'ari *kalam* to make it almost co-extensive with philosophy. The pioneer was Fakhru'd Din Razi (1149-1209) whose relations with the Ghurid court of Ghazni enabled him to travel, and who visited India. His enthusiasm for the Ash'ari school of Sunnism did not wean him away from the thought of Avicenna; he wrote a commentary upon his physics and metaphysics in the *Kitab al-Ishara't wa' l Tanbihat.* His most monumental contribution was the philosophization of the Quranic exegesis, later to be bitterly criticised by the famous Hambali jurist, Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328). Razi's admirers, however, even to the present day are numerous.[2]

There seems to be no surviving evidence of the progress in India of philosophical studies along Razi's line, Barani's persistent expressions of hatred towards Falasifa shows that they were Avecinians. He asserts, "By the God, who rescued Sultan Mahmud (of Ghazni) from every difficulty, if Ibn Sina, who is the reviver of the philosophy of Greece and the leader of all philosophers in Muslim countries, had fallen into the Sultan's hands, he would have ordered him to be cut to pieces and his flesh given to vultures."[3] According to him, those responsible for seducing Sultan Muhammad b. Tughluq from traditional Sunni beliefs were logicians and philosophers such as Najm Intishar, Sa'd, and Maulana 'Alimu'd Din.[4] The traveller Ibn Battuta points out that every day after morning prayer, time was set aside for discussing philosophical matters at the court of the Sultan.[5] The influence of the philosophers, according to Barani, made the Sultan ruthless, stone-hearted, cruel and irreligious.[6] Thus Barani urged that nothing but

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[1] W.W. Watt, *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali,* (London, 1963, 2nd edition), pp. 54, 62, 66, 68.

[2] *EI*, new, II, pp. 751-755.

[3] *Fatawa'i Jahandari* in M. Habib, and Afsar Khan, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate* (Allahabad, n.d.), p. 5.

[4] Ziya'u'd Din Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, (Calcutta, 1860-62), p. 35.

[5] Ibn Battuta, *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta* translated by A. Mahdi Husain (Baroda, 1953), p. 266.

[6] *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 467.

tafsir,[1] *hadis*,[2] and *fiqh*[3] should be taught to the Muslims and in support of this opinion he fabricated several imaginary aphorisms of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni.[4]

Some of the philosophers discussed by Barani occupied distinguished positions during the earlier reigns of the Sultans of Delhi. Of these, Sa'd was a favourite courtier of Sultan Jalalu'd Din Firuz Khalji (1290-1296) and occupied an important position at the court of Sultan 'Ala'u'd Din Khalji.[5] Maulana Najm Intishar was one of the forty-six distinguished scholars of the Islamic world who, as Barani says, could favourably be compared with Ghazali or Fakhrud-Din Razi.[6] The conflict between theology and philosophy went far deeper than mere academic discussions. Those who had philosophical leanings remained a target for attack by the 'ulama. But the orthodox were never able to banish them from the courts; and even the Afghan rulers patronised the philosophers.

The study of philosophy in Sultan Sikandar Lodi's reign (1489-1517) was reinvigorated with the coming of Shaikh 'Abdu'llah Tulanbi and Shaikh 'Azizu'llah Tulanbi from Multan. Shaikh 'Azizu'llah lived at Sambhal (about 120 miles east of Delhi) and Shaikh 'Abdu'llah established a seminary at Delhi. A galaxy of scholars were attracted to their seminaries. Among Shaikh 'Abdu'llah's disciples who rose to great eminence were Miyan Ladan,[7] Jamal Khan,[8] of Delhi, and Mir Saiyid Jalal of Badaun.[9] Sultan Sikandar, too, used to visit him. Shaikh 'Azizu'llah was a genius; among his pupils the most distinguished was Miyan Hatim of Sambhal.[10] Both Shaikh 'Abdu'llah and Shaikh 'Azizu'llah seem to have received a good grounding in the Avicenian tradition and influenced sufis as well as philosophers. They did not hesitate to attack the scholars of *fiqh*, refuting people of such eminence as Shaikh Allah Diya of Jaunpur and his son Bhikari.[1]

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[1] Qur'anic exegesis and the science of its interpretation.

[2] Hadis is a record of actions or sayings of Prophet Muhammad not revealed by god in the Qur'an, but handed down by tradition.

[3] *Fiqh* is the science of religious law and jurisprudence in Islam.

[4] *Fatawa i-Jahandari*, ff. 12a, 165a-175a.

[5] *Tarikh i-Firuz Sahi*, p. 198.

[6] *Ibid*, pp. 353-54.

[7] 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh*, III, (Calcutta, 1864-9), pp. 55, 77.

[8] *Ibid*, pp. 77-78.

[9] *Ibid*, p. 55.

[10] *Ibid*, pp. 2-6.

The impact of Graecizing philosophy was not confined to the study of works like those of Farabi and Avicenna. It was increasingly felt on the practical art of government, principally through the *Qabus*[2] *Nama* written by Kaika'us bin Iskandar in 475/1082 ; the *Siyasat*[3] *Nama* of Nizamu'l Mulk Tusi, the *Kitab Nasihatu'l Muluk*,[4] of Ghazali; and a large number of *Pand Namas* and *Wasiyat Namas* ("Books of political council and advice") written by anonymous scholars of lesser metal, and political testaments, ascribed to celebrated .statesmen of the past, but almost all spurious. Some were even fathered upon notables who had never lived. In these works, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were completely Islamised and admitted to the status of Islamic sages. The romances and parables ascribed to the philosophers enhanced their reputation among the Muslims. Legends about Alexander the Great and his tutor Aristotle stimulated considerable interest amongst the Muslim intellectual and governing class.

The Ibahatis

The earliest notice of this sect is given by Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) in the *Khaza'inu'l Futuh*, written in 1311-12. He laconically states that 'Ala'u'd Din Khalji ordered them all put to death. Firuz Tughluq likewise ordered the execution of the Ibahatis. Both the *Khaza'inu'l Futuh* and *Futuhat i-Firuz shahi* accuse them of incest, the *Futuhat* adding that they urged people to prostrate themselves before an image.

The *Sirat i-Firuz Shahi*, written by some anonymous author adds that they prostrate themselves on ground smeared with cow dung and scattered with flowers; men and women joining at night in promiscuous intercourse. They are required to abjure

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[1] *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh*, I, pp. 323-25.

[2] EIJ, Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge, 1958-1962, reprint), pp. 80-82.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 78-80.

[4] Translated into English by F.R.C. Bagley (London, 1964), Introduction, pp. IX-LXXIV.

Islam, eat pork and drink wine.

The description (of which the last part seems a credulous legend) suggests one of the numerous Tantric sects, about which some vague knowledge, augmented by rumour, was current among Muslims.

The *Futuhat i-Firuz Shahi* alleges that the leaders of the Ibahatis were Shi'is. In popular Sunni literature Shi'is are indiscriminately accused of incest. Whether or not the Ibahatis of the early Sultanate were Shi'is, they were not Hindu sectaries, who, however repellent their principles and practices to the orthodox, were generally left alone by Muslim rulers in India. To some Muslims, they served as a proof of the greatness and purity of Islam ; while the orthodox served God, these benighted wretches were cut off from His grace. The claim that they compelled converts to deny Islam probably reflects orthodox revulsion from their syncretic practices. If they were, as Professor Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi believes, merely a "Hindu sect" it is unlikely that they would have been specially singled out for persecution.[1]

To the orthodox, every sect of Hinduism was equally odious. To distinguish between them was a worthless waste of effort. *Ibahati* ("One who considers everything permissible") and *mulhid* ("one turned aside from the truth") are general terms of opprobrium used by the orthodox for any Muslim not conforming to their view of Islam, whether through conscience or expediency. Such people are often accused of the most extravagant moral laxity.[2]

Despite a superficial resemblance with Vamacaris or Vamamargis, which Professor Qureshi believes he can recognise, it is almost certain that the Ibahatis were Muslims. Professor Habib suggests that they were Isma'ili Shi'is. There is no evidence that the Isma'ilis or any other Shi'i sects were influenced to promiscuity by pre-Islamic Iranian doctrines such as Mazdakism and Manichaeism, as alleged by the orthodox.

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[1] *Khaza'inu'l Futuhl*, p. 20. I.H. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi* (Karachi, 1958, 4th edition), pp. 254-56.

[2] *EI*, new, III, p. 662 article on *Ibaha* (II) and *Ibahaliya* by I.H. Qureshi, p. 663. Abdu'l Qadir Badauni, *Nagatu'r Rashid* (India Office, Delhi Persian MS. Miscellaneous 34), 27. According to Badauni, *Wujudiya* and *i-bahiya* were identical.

It was quite usual for those whom the orthodox disapproved to be accused of the grossest crimes; in India, Tantric rites provided a convenient source of material for such charges. They rested on the shifting foundation of general rumour.

It is almost impossible to disentangle the *Ibahati* doctrines from the abhorrence conventionally expressed in the few surviving sources; in the sixteenth century literature some sufis too came to be called the *Ibahatis*.

Conflicts Between Shari'a and Practical Administration

The very institution of the Sultanate was a scandal in the eyes of some rabid 'ulama;[1] but practical theorists and orthodox such as Ghazali had given a religious colour to historical realities. They assimilated the Sasanid (226-651) principles of monarchy and transformed them into a broadly based ideological framework compatible with Islam. Quranic verses and traditions, genuine as well as spurious, were quoted to justify the position of the rulers; anecdotes were concocted, history was falsified, and liberties were fearlessly taken with the traditions of the prophet Muhammad and his companions. The second Caliph 'Umar and the Umaiyad 'Umar ibn 'Abdu'l 'Aziz (717-720) were made the heroes of anecdotes that sought to glorify the Sasanid ideal of government; righteousness, magnanimity, self denial and justice, especially towards cultivators and craft and merchant guilds. On the basis of material borrowed from the Iranian and Indian legends, the two 'Umars were made to excel the pre-Islamic Iranian rulers Ardashir Pabakan (225-240) and Khusrau Nushirvan (531-579) and Khusrau's wise counsellor Buzurjmihr. Thus Shaikh Nizamu'd Din Auliya (d. 725/1325), the famous Chishti saint, impressed upon his listeners that when the King of Iraq was deprived of his throne in the reign of 'Umar I, he had not left a single village in his kingdom in a desolate state.[2] Verse of chapter IV from the Qur'an[3] was interpreted as "Obey God and the prophets and your princes," and verse 25 of chapter III[1] was given the meaning: "God on High, who is the King of Kings *(Padshah i-Padshahan)* gives the kingship to whom He wills, and that He strengthens one man through His favour and humbles another through His justice." The author of the *Nasihatu'l Muluk* says:

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[1] cf. Views of Nuru'd Din Mubarak Ghaznavi (Barani, *Tarikhs i-Firuz Shahi* p. 41).

[2] *Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, pp. 196-97.

[3] O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you...

> "As you will hear in the Traditions *(Akhbar)*, 'the Sultan is God's shadow on earth,' which means that he is high-ranking, and the Lord's delegate over His creatures. It must therefore be recognised that this kingship and the divine effulgence *(farr i-iz'di)* have been granted to them by God, and that he must accordingly be obeyed, loved and followed.[2]

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq stamped upon his token currency: "He who obeys the Sultan obeys the merciful God."[3] What the theorists emphasised was an impartial justice; and they marshalled tradition after tradition in support of their thesis, as for example, "One hour of just government by a Sultan is better than sixty years of worship by pious worshippers," "To give redress to the victim of justice is to purify one's mind," "Sovereignty endures even when there is unbelief, but will not endure when there is injustice."[4]

Sultan Ghiyasu'd Din Balban urged upon his son Prince Muhammad. "The king's heart is the mirror of the Divine attributes. As long as God does not inspire the hearts of the kings with the general decrees relating to His slaves, matters concerning them which are dependant on the heart and tongue of the rulers are not accomplished."[5]

Balban divided the scope of the activities of the rulers into two spheres: *Din-Panahi* ("protection of religion") and *jahandari* ("secular administration"). He used to quote four principles of *Din-Panahi*, which he alleged that he had heard from Saiyid

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[1] Say: O Allah, owner of the kingdom, Thou givest the kingdom to whom Thou pleasest, and takest away the kingdom from whom Thou pleasest, and Thou exaltest whom Thou pleasest and abasest whom Thou pleasest. In Thine hand is the good. Surely, Thou art possessor of power over all things.

[2] *Counsel for Kings*, p. 45.

[3] Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty* (Calcutta, 1963), p. 520.

[4] *Counsel for Kings*, pp. 71-72.

[5] *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 71.

Nuru'd Din Mubarak Ghaznavi,[1] the celebrated Suhrawardi Saint of Sultan Shamsu'd Din Iltutmish's reign;

1. Infidelity and idolatry should be uprooted if possible; if not, the king should insult, disgrace, dishonour and defame *mushriks* ("believers in a plurality of gods") and idol-worshipping Hindus and overthrow the brahmans.

2. Sinful and shameless deeds should be ruthlessly suppressed, but prostitutes should not be prohibited from practising their profession secretly, for if there were no prostitutes to gratify their lust, libidinous rascals would attack Muslim harems.

3. The implementation of the principles of *shari'a* should be assigned to pious, God-fearing and religious men. Philosophers should be expelled from Islamic kingdoms, and the teaching of philosophy should be strictly forbidden. The king should not give office to those who do not follow the Sunni creed strictly.

4. Kings should enforce strict justice, and eliminate oppression and tyranny.

According to Nuru'd Din Mubarak Ghaznavi, adherence to these principles would ensure the salvation of all rulers, even if, while establishing their rule, they had violated the *shari'a* and had committed sins all their lives.[2]

In fact all the Sultans were occupied with the problem of the proliferation of non-Sunni beliefs, and the growing popularity of the Falasifa. To this, India added the problem of an overwhelming Hindu population. In the thirteenth century, the 'ulama who were uprooted and driven away from their own countries tended to examine the problem academically.

The codification of the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence on the line of Roman-Byzantine law ended attempts to go to original sources of codification and the doors of *ijtihad* (applying *qiyas* or analogical deduction to the *Qur'an* and *hadis*) were believed to have been closed. *Taqlid* ("adherence to one of the four schools") was regarded as the fundamental basis of the religious life of the Sunnis. As elsewhere, in India too the implementation of the hudud ("penal laws") gave rise to immeasurable complications. The civil laws of the shari'a, although were not difficult to follow, were violated with impunity in matters relating to taxes, booty and inheritance of property.[1] Thus the conflict between the *shari'a* and the practical needs of administration[2] was resolved through *zawabits*. Barani says:

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[1] A disciple of Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi (died 1234); he died at Delhi in 1234-35 and was buried near the Hauz i-Shamsi, or Tank of Iltutmish. Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi, *Akhbaru' Akhyar*, (Delhi, 1914), pp. 28-29.

[2] *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 41-44.

"A state-law *("zabita")* in the technique of administration means a rule of action which the king has imposed as an obligatory duty upon himself for promoting the welfare of the state. From it he never deviates."[3]

These laws, as Barani gives us to understand, had to be framed very carefully and conscientiously. It was desirable that all aspects of the problems should be adequately discussed with wise men of political experience and acumen. They were not necessarily to be referred to the 'ulama. In ordinary circumstances, the violation of *shari'a* was not permissible, but in circumstances where there was no way out of an impasse, Barani was exceedingly practical. He says:

"If there is anything in these laws against the *sunnah*, and you find their enforcement to be necessary nevertheless owing to the people's extraordinary lack of virtue, or their extreme weakness of faith, then you should not deem the laws to be right and correct. You should generously give alms in compensation, and be afraid of the evil you are doing. It should be clear to you that the enforcement of these laws is dealt with by this precept of the *shari'a* 'Necessity makes things forbidden lawful."[4]

Balban preferred to call his conquest by the Persian name *jahangiri* ("world subduing") rather than the Arabic term *jihad* ("war in the cause of religion"). He saw his duty in the prudent management of the state, rather than in relentless conquests.[5] His son, Bughra Khan, in his last words to his own son Mu'izzu'd Din Kaiqubad (1287-1290) urged:

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[1] *Ibid*, pp. 290-295.

[2] *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 136-37.

[3] *Fatawa i-Jahandari*, f. 157a.

[4] *Ibid*, ff. 157b-58a.

[5] *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 50-52.

"Only that ruler can in truth and justice be called and deemed a king in whose territory no man goes to sleep naked and hungry, and who makes laws *("zabita")* and frames measures *("mawazin")* through which no subject of his has to face any material distress *(darmandqi)* endangering his life."[1]

Sultan Jalalu'd Din Khalji (1290-1296) voiced the feeling of Barani and the orthodox 'ulama when he cynically pointed out to his nephew, Ahmad Chap, that it was beyond his capacity to comply with the conditions of Din-Panahi, for in his own capital Hindus, the enemies of Muhammad's religion, lived in increasing material prosperity and boldly practised idolatry.[2]

In fact, the Turki rule was a military occupation. The *ranas*, *ra'is*, and *rawats* or the tributary Hindu chiefs at upper level, and the *khuts*, *maqaddams* and *chaudharis*, on village headmen level, controlled it in the villages. 'Ala'u'd Din's revenue reforms were designed to crush these people's high-handedness.[3] His market reforms and price control regulations introduced for military reasons continued to evoke the admiration of the 'ulama and the sufis mainly because of the success they had obtained in making the commodities of daily use cheaper for the urban classes. The Sultan whom the posterity placed into the category of a saint[4] had, however himself no misgivings about his own administrative measures.[5] He frankly admitted:

"I do not know whether these orders are in conformity with the *shari'a* or contrary to it. Whatever I consider to be for the good of the administration, and expedient, that I decree."[6]

In critical situations, the Sultans had to resort to amusing devices to assert their dignity as Muslim rulers. When, in 1281, Balban reached Sunargaon in East Bengal in pursuit of the rebel Tughril, he found that he could chase him no further without the co-operation of an independent local Hindu chief, Ra'i Danujamadhava Ariraja Dasaratha, who insisted that the Sultan should rise to receive him in audience. Since a Muslim sultan must refrain from exhibiting respect to an infidel, considerable embarrassment prevailed in the Sultan's court. Malik Bektars, one of his eminent nobles, thereupon advised him to take a falcon in his hand and suggested that when the Ra'i had come and performed the *zaminbos* ("kissing of ground"), the Sultan should stand erect, and release the falcon. This device pulled the wool over his courtiers' eyes and his prestige was not apparently impaired.[1]

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 147. *Fatawa i-Jahandari*, ff. 90b-91b.
[2] *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 216.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 288-290.
[4] Hamid Qalandar, *Khairu'l Majalis* (Aligarh, 1959), p. 241.
[5] *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 290-294.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 296.

By the tenth century, the Muslims had organized craft and merchant guilds *(sin)* which played a significant role in the development of industries and trade. The Isma'ilis, subsequently the sufis accorded them increasing patronage. The sufis tried to invigorate them with a very high sense of morality but the Jain merchant guilds of Gujarat seem to have surpassed the merchant guilds of Lahore, apparently Muslims, in fair dealing.[2]

The Hindu money lenders and bankers controlled the economy of the sultans at all levels. They lent money to the reckless and spendthrift *iqta'dars*,[3] or those who needed immediate cash to equip their armies for military expeditions. They issued *hundis* ("bills of exchange") and controlled trade and commerce. Barani was one of their regular customers;[4] and he was not the only one to be enraged when the "despised Hindu" made repayment of the old loan a condition of a fresh one or refused a loan to those who had no means to pay back the money borrowed.

Opinions were also divided on social relations with Hindus. An incident related by the celebrated sufi, Saiyid Muhammad bin Yusuf Husaini, known as Gisu daraz (*c.* 1321-1422), reflects the conflict in attitude towards them. One day Maulana Jamalu'd Din, an 'alim, was sitting with his friend Maulana 'Ala'u'd Din and a physician named Maulana Sadru'd Din when a Hindu physician, Bihtu by name, came up to him. During the conversation Maulana Sadru'd Din said, "Abe (you rascal) Bihtu," where upon Maulana Jamalu'd Din enquired, "Oh Maulana! What do you mean by Abe!" Maulana Sadru'd Din answered, "Since he is a Hindu, I have used this form of address." Maulana Jamalu'd Din replied, "What if he is a Hindu? Why do you loosen your tongue?"[1]

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[1] Yahya bin Ahmad Sihrindi, *Tarikh i-Mubarak Shahi* (Calcutta, 1931), p. 42.

[2] *Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, pp. 130-131.

[3] *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 207.

[4] He persistently complains that then he was writing *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, nobody would lend him any money, p. 166.

Sufism in the Indian Environment

Sufism represents the inward or esoteric aspects of Islam; cutting across the hair-splitting doctrines of formal theology and the over-intellectualism of the philosophers, the *sufis* seek to arouse the urge for ontological realisation of the Ultimate Reality in the heart of the mystic. It is based on intense religious consciousness and finds logic and reasoning futile for a serious spiritual life.

The etymology of the name and the early development of the doctrine are the subject of hot controversy among scholars, but it is now generally accepted that several verses of the Qur'an, and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, genuine as well as fabricated, from the basic framework of sufism. Even in the lifetime of Muhammad some of his followers in Medina had withdrawn themselves from worldly pursuits and devoted themselves exclusively to prayers and fasting. After his death, a few of his companions renounced the worldly life in protest against the growing social injustice of the governing classes, becoming links connecting the *sufi* movement with the prophet of Islam. However, the germination of sufism itself took place mainly in the new Arab township of Basra which controlled routes between the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Iran. There many of the currents and cross-currents of Islamic civilisation emerged and crystallised. It was in Basra that 'Hasan al-Basri (642-728) flourished and came to be recognised as the founder of sufism. A man endowed with intense religious feelings and an ascetic bent of mind, he exhorted, "Repolish these hearts (the seats of religious feeling), for they very quickly grow rusty." And again, "Make this world into a bridge over which you cross but on which you do not build."[2] The more he and his followers prayed and worshipped, the more they found themselves overwhelmed by the Divine Majesty and the fear of the Day of Judgment. With them, asceticism and searching examination of the heart were the main pillars of sufism.

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[1] Gisu Daraz, *Jawami' ul-Kilam* (British Museum Ms. Or. 252) ff, 137b-138a.

[2] H. Ritter's article on Hasan al-Basri in the *EI*, new, III, pp. 247-48.

It was, however, left for Rabi'a al-'Adwiyyah of Basra (713 or 717-801) to submerge her personality in the love of the Divine Beauty and show the sufis the path of disinterested and dispassionate love of God upon which the later superstructure of sufism was built. The sayings of this saintly woman who lived a life of celibacy remind Professor Browne of Saint Theresa.[1] She regarded worship prompted by fear of hell or desire for reward in paradise as the greatest impediment to the disinterested love of God and sang:

"In two ways have I loved Thee; selfishly,
And with a love that worthy is of Thee.
In selfish love my joy in Thee I find,
While to all else, and others, I am blind.
But in that love which seeks Thee worthily,
The veil is raised that I may look on Thee.
Yet is the praise in that or this not mine,
In this and that the praise is wholly Thine."[2]

Other early centres of sufism emerged in Kufah, Khurasan, Balkh, Egypt and Syria. At Ramlah in Syria, a wealthy Christian built a *khanqah* ("hospice") for Muslim mystics. Abu Hashim of Kufa, who died after 777, was the first Muslim mystic and ascetic who came to be formally named a sufi. During the golden prime of the 'Abbasids, in Baghdad, Haris Muhasibi (781-857) defined the mystic stages as state (hal) and satisfaction (riza) and provided sufism with a mystico-intellectual framework. Within two hundred years of the beginning of Islam, the accumulation of the mystic experience of individual sufis transformed their system into a neatly-drawn-up code of spiritual conduct. Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and to some extent the theistic truths of the *Upanishads,* had a powerful effect upon sufi ideologies and practices, but the sufis assimilated them into their own system and re-interpreted them in the light of their own religious traditions.

The sufis despised the worldly life; they indulged in self-mortification and depended upon Divine Grace in order to obtain gnosis and the love of God. But all this was of little help to that great mystic of Bistam (Western Khurasan) named Bayazid (died 874), the great-grandson of a Magian. After rigorous ascetic exercises, extending over decades, he was convinced that he had finally shed his ego in *fana* ("passing away") "As snakes their skin"[1] and had achieved the ultimate stage of spiritual development. His changed self-consciousness was expressed in those famous utterances *(shathat)* which scandalized and shocked his contemporaries: *Subhani! Ma a'zama shani* ("Glory be to me. How great is My Majesty!"); and "Thy obedience to me is greater than my obedience to Thee"; "I am the Throne and the Footstool"; "I am the Well-Preserved Tablet"; "I saw the Ka 'bah walking round me"; and so on."[2]

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[1] E.G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (reprint, Cambridge, 1964), I, p. 299.

[2] M. Smith, *Rabi'a the Mystic* (Cambridge, 1925), pp. 102-104.

The utterances of Bayazid, although made in fits of ecstasy, mark a clear departure from earlier expressions of Divine Unity and Love. They bear a close resemblance to the well-known teachings of some theistic *Upanishads*, such as *Brahma'smi* ("I am Brahma") or *Tat tvam asi* ("Thou art that"). Some hagiologists have suggested that Bayazid learnt his new doctrine of *fana* ("total destruction of the empirical self in God") from his teacher Abu 'Ali Sindi. Among modern scholars, Nicholson supports the theory while Arberry rejects it. Recently Zaehner has re-examined it at full length and has taken great pains to prove that "the evidence for Vedantin influence on Abu Yazid (Bayazid) is not merely the fact that his master was a man from Sind, but the inexplicability of many of his utterances except against a *Vedantin* background. It is this internal evidence that makes it overwhelmingly probable that Abu Yazid's master, Abu 'Ali, was a native of what everyone normally understands by Sind and not of a village in Khurasan."[3]

The passages from Bayazid quoted by Zaehner show that the parallelism between the *Upanishads* and Bayazid was not merely verbal or accidental but resulted from an environment in which Hindu ascetic practices and some of the fundamental truths of the theistic *Upanishads* were well known. From the reign of Darius the Great (522 BC—486 BC) to the time of Bayazid, the regions from the Punjab to Khurasan were at most times governed by the same political powers and contacts between the two regions were never severed. The intellectual and spiritual contributions of India must have been known in Khurasan, and Bayazid seems to have been thoroughly imbued with them. What seems unproven is that Sankara's ideas had any impact on Bayazid, therefore the problem of the probable source by which they were transmitted does not come into the question. Moreover, Bayazid does not suggest that the phenomenal world or "I" is an illusion; in his mystical experience "I" is the most formidable impediment to the realisation of Truth.

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[1] H. Ritter's article on Abu Yazid in the *EI*, new, I, p. 162.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 162-163.

[3] C. Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism* (London, 1960), p. 102.

The mark left by Bayazid on sufism was indelible; some believed that he had identified himself as God. However, under the orthodox leadership of Junaid al-Baghdadi (d. 910), sufis came to believe that in Bayazid's *Weltanschauung, fana* does not mean loss of essence and destruction of personality, but simply means "the destruction of the creaturely life of the flesh and participation in the Divine."[1] The mystical outburts of Bayazid were called *Shathat* ("Theopathic Statements"); and looked upon as an exception and not a rule of sufi life. It began to be advocated that sufism is an esoteric experience of the spiritual elite which in no circumstances should be divulged to the uninitiated.

The code of secrecy was not easy for the sufis to follow; in their poetry they could not help expressing ideas which amounted to the ontological unity of "Self" with God. They borrowed symbols from their non-Islamic environment and used them with impunity in their verses. Hallaj, the great sufi martyr (922), who was an outstanding poet and scholar, reiterated Bayazid's ravings in his celebrated declaration *Ana'l Haq* ("I am Truth"). The works of Hallaj have now been brought to light by the French orientalist M. Louis Massignon. Nicholson sums up, "According to Hallaj, the essence of God's essence is Love. Before the creation God loved Himself in absolute unity and through love revealed Himself to Himself alone. Then, desiring to behold that love-in-aloneness, that love without otherness and duality, as an external object, He brought forth from non-existence an image of Himself, endowed with all His attributes and names. This divine image is Adam, in and by whom God is made manifest—divinity objectified in humanity. Hallaj, however, distinguishes the human nature *(nasut)* from the Divine *(lahut)*. Though mystically united, they are not essentially identical and interchangeable. Personality survives even in union: water does not become wine, though wine be mixed with it. Using a more congenial metaphor, Hallaj says in verses which are often quoted:

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[1] *Ibid*, pp. 147, 218-224.

> I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I.
> We are two spirits dwelling in one body,
> If thou seest me, thou seest Him:
> And if thou seest Him, thou seest us both."[1]

Massignon and Garedt compare Hallaj's sayings with those of the Christian mystic, St. John of the Cross, "Two natures (God and man) in a single spirit and love of God" and find them identical.[2] This leaves us with no doubt that Hallaj never propagated the doctrine of *hulul* ("the substantial union with God or incarnation") as his enemies accuse him of doing.

With Bayazid and Hallaj an important phase of the development of sufism come to an end. The orthodox sufis, who urged the necessity of observing the Islamic law in all outward practices, felt alarmed at the antimonian tendencies which the teachings of Bayazid and Hallaj encouraged among extremists and imposters. They maintained that Bayazid's utterances, and for that matter even Hallaj's, belonged to a state of *sukr* ("mystic intoxication") and that sufis should remain in a state of *sahw* ("sobriety") and should not lose their senses or balance of mind. But again sufism, based as it was on emotion of love, could not accept restrictions on its mode of expression. Along with *sukr* and *sahw* two other terms came into popular sufi usage: *qabz* and *bast*. In the state of *qabz* ("depression") sufis were overwhelmed with the fear and majesty of God; in the state of *bast* ("elation") they were filled with hope of Divine Mercy and the joy of Divine Beauty. Both states, it was believed, were beyond human control; they were states bestowed by God's grace which helped the mystic to pass through *fana* and achieve his goal of Truth.

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[1] R.A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 80.

[2] L. Massignon and L. Gardet's article on Hallaj in the *EI*, new, III, p. 102.

From the eleventh century onward the number of treatises on sufism and hagiological texts began to mount. Their authors seemed deeply concerned at the growing charlatanism in sufism and sought to reconcile it with Islamic law. The most important effort in this direction was made by Imam Qushairi (d.1074). He gave a coherent account of sufi ideologies and practices and laid down rules for them. He gave sufis the status of *'ulama-i-batin* ("Esoteric *'alims*") as distinct from the theologians whom he named *'ulama i-zahir* ("Exoteric *'alims*").

The life and teachings of Abu Sa'id ibn Abl'l Khair (967-1049), the most outstanding sufi of the period, however, show that each sufi tended to develop his own spiritual code and social ethics. Abu Sa'id belonged to Mayhana, the chief town of the Khawarn district of Khurasan. In his youth he had practised rigorous ascetic exercises, but later he began to believe that "The true saint goes in and out amongst the people and eats and sleeps with them and buys and sells in the market and marries and takes part in social intercourse, and never forgets God for a single moment."[1] He organised *khanqah* life more systematically and urged that the shortest way to God was charity "to give comfort to the heart of a Muslim." He allowed young men to associate with his *sama'*[2] ("audition or musical gatherings of sufis"). One day, whilst preaching at Nishapur, he was so overcome with ecstasy that he burst out with the declaration, "There is naught within this vest *(jubba)* except Allah."[3]

By the eleventh century the sufis were divided into several orders; Hujwiri (died after 1088)[4] mentions fourteen of them which were named after their founders. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries many of these disappeared and new ones emerged with dynamic organisational capacity. From sufi *khanqahs* there flowed such strong currents of Muslim spiritual life that sufism was transformed into a popular movement and a way of life. As political turmoils shattered Muslim social and cultural organisations, it was sufism alone which met all challenges with confidence and urged Muslims to divert their attention to the Supreme.

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[1] *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, p. 55.

[2] For *Sama' see* R.A. Nicholson, *Kashf al-Mahjub* (London, 1936), pp. 393-420. Describing dancing he says:
"In short, all foot-play (*pay-bazi*) is bad in law and reason, by whomsoever it is practised, and the best of mankind cannot possibly practise it; but when the heart throbs with exhilaration and rapture becomes intense and agitation of ecstasy is manifested and conventional forms are gone, that agitation (*iztirab*) is neither dancing nor foot-play nor bodily indulgence, but a dissolution of the soul," p. 416.

[3] *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, p. 73.

[4] An inscription on Hujwiri's tomb gives 465/1072-73 as the date of the saint's death, but he seems to have survived Khwaja 'Abdu'llah Ansari, who died in 1088-89.

In subsequent centuries new ideological developments took place in sufism; the most remarkable was Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of *Wahdatu'l-Wujud* Ibn 'Arabi was born at Murcia in south-east Spain in 1165, and died at Damascus in 1240. He emphasised that Reality is one and indivisible. The creative power of God acts through His servant who is a locus *(mahal)* on which this power is focussed. He says, "The believer praises the God who is in his form of belief and with whom he has connected himself, and to praise the work is to praise the maker of it; its excellence or imperfection belongs to its maker. For this reason he blames the beliefs of others, which he would not do if he were just. Beyond doubt, the worshipper of this particular God shows ignorance when he criticises others on account of their beliefs. If he understood the saying of Junayd, 'The colour of the water is the colour of the vessel containing it,' he would not interfere with the beliefs of others, but would perceive God in every form and in every belief. He has opinion, not knowledge: therefore God said, 'I am in My servant's opinion of Me.' i.e. 'I do not manifest Myself to him save in the form of his belief.' God is absolute or restricted, as He pleases; and the God of religious beliefs is subject to limitation, for He is the God who is contained in the heart of His servant. But the absolute God is not contained by anything, for He is the being of all things and the Being of Himself, and a thing is not said either to contain itself or not to contain itself."[1]

In following centuries the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi were disseminated by a large number of distinguished scholars and poets who made them popular with all other sections of the Muslim population as well as with sufis. The 'ulama reacted against it sharply, and an important sufi, Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Daula Simnani (1261-1336), propounded a counter-doctrine of *Wahdat al-Shuhud* ("Unity of witness or vision"), but no opposition could undermine the influence of Ibn 'Arabi. Sufism and *Wahdat al-Wujud* came to be recognised as identical, and the teachings of earlier sufis were re-interpreted so as to make then compatible with Ibn 'Arabi's philosophy.

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[1] *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, p. 159.

Sufis exchanged ideas with non-Muslim mystics quite frequently, the influence of Ibn 'Arabi accelerating the process. Al-Biruni (*c.* 973-1048) points out many interesting ideas running parallel in sufism to Patanjali's system of yoga. He says that, "The doctrine of Patanjali is akin to that of the sufi regarding being occupied in meditation on the Truth (i.e. God), for they say, 'As long as you point to something, you are not a *monist;* but when *the Truth* seizes upon the object of your pointing and annihilates it, then there is no longer an indicating person nor an object indicated'."[1]

By the tenth century, the ancient Yoga doctrines ascribed to Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutra*, and then intermixed with the Buddhist and Hindu Tantrism, the doctrines of Saivite *agamas* and principles of *rasayana* ("Hindu alchemy"), had given birth to the Yogic Cult of the nathas. They were popularly known as siddhas or those who had obtained complete mastery over the Hindu esoteric techniques. Their legendary founder is Lord Siva whom they call Adi Natha ("The Primaeval Lord"). Emerging in Bengal, Assam, Nepal and Tibet, by the eleventh century they had spread throughout Northern and travelled beyond Peshawar and Kabul. Their first human preceptor, according to tradition, was Matsyendranath; but it was his successor Gorakhnath who flourished in the eleventh or twelfth century, who endowed the natha cult with a dynamic philosophy and organisation. In his short treatises, *hatha-yoga* ("physical culture") acquires overtones of *raja-yoga* ("spiritual culture") and *deha-vada* ("the doctrine of the body"); and *kaya sadhana* ("physical culture") obtain deeper esoteric meaning. He founded the order of the Kanphata ("ear-split") yogis. A corpus of poetic literature in the regional languages, particularly in Hindi, which has been recently brought to light, has been ascribed to Gorakhnath but seems rather to be a hybrid mixture of the compositions of his disciples and other saints including sufis. The study of this literature as the background for the sufi hagiologies shows that from the 13th to the 16th centuries one was influenced by the other. For the proper evaluation of this influence, the subject can well be sub-divided as follows:

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[1] E.C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, (Indian reprint, 1964), p. 87.

1. Physical culture, *rasayana* and the supernatural.
2. Mystical practices.
3. Intellectual and ideological influence.
4. Syncretism.

1. For the success of their spiritual life, sufis depended upon Divine Grace. The Qur'an mentions miracles of the Prophets, but these were intended to enable to fulfil the prophetic mission assigned them by God. In hagiological texts, some miracles and supernatural feats are ascribed to early sufis. Bayazid himself performed miracles in his youth, but later on we find him telling his preceptor Abu'Ali Sindi that the performance of miracles distracts sufis from their serious mystical achievements.[1] By the time of Abu Sa'id bin Abi'l Khair the popularity of some sufis seems to have rested upon their capacity to perform supernatural feats. "They said to him, 'so-and-so walks on water.' He replied, 'It is easy enough: frogs and waterfowl do it.' They said, So-and-so flies in the air.' 'So do birds and insects,' he replied. They said, 'So-and-so goes from one town to another in a moment of time.' 'Satan,' he rejoined, 'goes in one moment from the East to the West. Things like these have no great value'; and he proceeded to give the definition of the true saint which has been quoted already—a man who lives in friendly intercourse with his fellow-creatures, yet is never forgetful of God."[2]

Supernatural feats of the sort given above occur in popular medieval Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism and *hatha yogic* traditions. The confrontation between a Yogi and Shaikh Saifu'd Din[3] of Kazirun (about 70 miles east of Shiraz) is mentioned in an anecdote related by Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Auliya (died 1325) to his disciples on 4 June 1310. A Yogi went to visit Shaikh Saifu'd

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[1] Sahlaji, *Shatahat al-Sufiyya* (Cairo, 1949), p. 102.
[2] *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, p. 67.
[3] He had settled in Uch.

Din. After some discussions he challenged the Shaikh to perform miracles. The Shaikh said, "You have thrown out the challenge, you should be the first to perform a miracle." The yogi rose from ground into the air and his head touched the ceiling, then he came straight down. Now it was the Shaikh's turn. He prayed God to grant similar power to him; whereupon he flew first to the west, then to the north, then to the south and then returned to where he had been sitting. The yogi, accepting his defeat, said, "Your miracle was possible, because of Divine Grace; mine was the result of human efforts."[1]

Although this anecdote was told by as eminent an Indian saint as Shaikh Nizamu'd Din Auliya, it belongs to that category of apocryphal material which the sufis and a large section of the gullible Muslim community believed to be true. What it clearly demonstrates is the *tantric* and *hatha-yogic* influence which had extended from India to Khurasan. In India, the natha yogis visited the sufi *khanqahs* frequently; and the hagiologies of the Chishti[2] and Firdausi[3] orders give interesting glimpses of contact and exchange of ideas with them. The earliest authentic collection of descriptions of the discourses of Indian sufis is available in *Fawa'idn'l Fuwad.* It was collected by Mir Hasan, and gives a chronological dated account of the discourses of his preceptor Shaikh Nizamu'd Din Auliya. On three different occasions, Shaikh Nizamu'd Din Auliya related his reminiscences of the visits of yogis to the *Khanqah* ("hospice") of his preceptor Shaikh Faridu'd Din Ganji-Shakar (1175-1265). On one occasion we find the story of a new disciple of Shaikh Farid asking the yogi to tell him a medicine for growing long hair.[4] On another occasion Shaikh Nizamu'd Din Auliya himself took an interest in the discourse of a yogi relating to the mystico-magical knowledge of sex.[5] The third account deals with the *hathayogic* division of the human body into two regions. Above the navel is the spiritual region associated with truth, purity and morality, while the region below the navel is the region of the profane, connected with self-control. Shaikh Nizamu'd Din Auliya, as he admitted to his disciples, was impressed with this.[1] In fact this is a Persian version of the regions of Siva and Sakti in *hatha-yoga;* the region above the navel in the human body is associated with Siva, while that below the navel is connected with Sakti.

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[1] *Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, pp. 57-58.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 21, 97, 250, 257-58.

[3] Zain Badr 'Arabi (ed.), *Ms'danu'l Ma'ani*, Bihar, 1884, pp. 8-9, Shah. Shu'aib bin Shaikh Jalal Munyari, *Manaqibu'l Asfiya* (Calcutta, 1895), pp. 138-39.

[4] *Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, p. 250.

[5] *Ibid*, pp. 257-58.

The apocryphal hagiologies of the Chishti saints, which were compiled in the fourteenth century[2] represent sufis flying from one part of the world to another. The theme of sufis and yogis vying with one another in performing miracles is unending in later sufi literature. The nature of these miracles does not differ much from that of miracles which the nathas themselves are said to have performed. Ibn Battuta saw more than fifty yogis or Buddhist Tantriks in Turkistan at the court of Turmashirin.[3] In India, Muhammad bin Tughluq arranged a court performance of miraculous flying through the air by a Yogi, who crossed the prescribed limits, thus causing his teacher to order his wooden sandals to bring the Yogi back to earth.[4] In sufi literature, the shoes of a sufi master bring the flying yogi back to the ground.

Even eminent sufis did not dispute the power of yogis to perform miracles but called it *istidraj* ("conferring of benefits by God on obstinate sinners").[5] However, fifteenth and sixteenth century saints such as Kabir (1440-1518) and Nanak (1469-1538) strongly condemned yogis for their over-concentration on magic, sorcery and the occult. The *Guru Granth* of Guru Nanak tells of several contests between Guru Nanak and the yogis in which we find the yogis worsted. Even serious nathas did not see eye to eye with impostors and those who did not understand the true spirit of yoga. Charlatans and impostors confronted sufis themselves with serious problem; the *Rushd Nama* of the celebrated Chishti saint Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi (1453-1537) uses the terminology of the nathas to condemn sufis who had put on such an outward garb in order to satisfy their carnal desires.[1]

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 97.

[2] M. Habib, "Chishti Mystic Records of the Sultanate Period" in *Medieval India Quarterly*, Aligarh, I, no. 2, pp. 15-37.

[3] Probably Dharmasri (1326-1333) converted to Islam. Rene Grousset, *L'Empire Des Steppes* (Payot, 1948), p. 414.

[4] *Voyages d'ibn Batoutah* IV, (Paris, 1877), pp. 38-40.

[5] Saiyid Jalal Bukhari Makhdum Jahaniyan, *Safar Nama* (Delhi, Persian Ms. 1107, India Office), ff. 159a-65b.

2. *Salat* (Prayers), fasting, and *zikr* (remembrance of God) formed the basis of the sufi meditative life, but the need to make these more rigorous compelled sufis to borrow ascetic exercises from other religious traditions and to Islamise them. Abu Sa'id ibn Abi'l Khair is said to have performed the *salat-i ma'kus*, and, Shaikh Nizamu'd Din Auliya, believed that the Prophet Muhammad himself had carried out this type of prayer.[2] This was performed by tying a rope to the feet and suspending oneself head downwards, preferably in a well. Shaikh Faridu'd Din Ganj i-Shakar performed it for forty nights continuously in a well in a lonely mosque at Uch (Sind).[3] Other eminent Chishti saints,[4] too, performed this practice which was seemingly borrowed from *hatha-yoga*.

The most significant borrowing was the "watching of breath" which all sufi orders followed in one form or the other. Hindus called this *pranayama*, and sufis named it *pass i-anfas*. It became popular from the times of Bayazid Bistami and was perfected by famous sufi orders such as the Naqshbandis,[5] the Shattaris[6] and the Chishtis. Referring to the yogic practice of inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath, Shaikh Nasiru'd Din Chiragh i-Dehli (died 1356), the successor of Shaikh Nizamu'd Din Auliya, defines a sufi as one whose retention of breath is measured in time units. The perfect sufi is a *sahib i-nafs*[7] (master of his breath). In *hatha-yoga*, the retention of breath is the key to the *pranayama* and the time units are called *matras*. Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi, using the natha terminology, says that the control of vital breath (*prana*) enables the sufi to reach his goal and obtain immortality. He explains that the sleeping divine power (*sakti* or *kula kundalini*) exists in the form of a coiled serpent in the lowest nervous plexus on the lowest extremity of the spinal chord (*muladhara*). When it is awakened through *pranayama*, all the internal and external obstacles to spiritual progress are removed and the psycho-vital energy ascends rapidly towards its ideal or the abode of Siva in *sahasrara* (the lotus of thousand petals in the head), which Shaikh 'Abu'l Quddus calls *muldwara.*[1]

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[1] S.A.A. Rizvi and Zaidi, J.R., *Alakh Bani* (Hindi translation of the *Rushd Nama* of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi (Aligarh, 1971), p. 103.

[2] *Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, p. 9.

[3] Amir Khurd, *Siyaru'l Auliya* (Delhi, 1884-85), p. 70.

[4] *Siyaru'l Auliya*, p. 70; *Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, pp. 8-9.

[5] The order named after Khwaja Baha'u'd Din Naqshband (1317-89 found immense popularity in Transoxiana. The sufis of this order thinking themselves as removed from the realm of spiritual bliss, which they call their homeland (*watan*), affect to consider life on earth as a journey designed to carry them back to their original homeland.

[6] This is also a very old order but was introduced into India rather late, by Shaikh 'Abdullah Shattari (died in 1485), S.A.A Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movement in Northern India* (Agra, 1965), pp. 63-64.

[7] '*Khairul' Majalis*, pp. 59-60.

3. The theistic philosophy of Gorakhnath differs both from *advaita* (monism) and *dvaita* (dualism). Gorakhnath believed that Absolute Truth is above the concept of *bhava* (existence) and *abhava* (negation of existence), and is beyond the reach of all speculation and imagination; it is *Para Brahma,* indescribable, unknowable and even unthinkable. His doctrine is known as *Dvaitadvaita-vilakshana-vada.*[2] He accepts the Upanishadic and Vedantic view of the unity of the individual *atman* (true self) with the Absolute Spirit, but does not consider the cosmic order and the individual soul as illusory. He says "That nameless (and formless and manifestationless) Supreme Spirit is eternally self-existent, absolutely one (i.e. differenceless), without any birth or death (or modification). This is the well-known conception (about Reality) of the *siddhas* (enlightened seers). His Unique Power, which is eternally inherent in His nature and one with Him and which is of the character of Pure Will (i.e without any manifestation or any object of will or process of willing in the transcendent plane) is also well known."[3]

The sufis found the definition of Ultimate Reality given by the Natha Siddhas remarkably similar to the Unity of Being explained by such Persian poets as 'Attar, (*c.* 1142-1220) Rumi (1207-1273), Shabistari (died 1320) and Jami (1414-1492). The exchange of ideas between the nathas and the sufis confirmed the former more strongly in their views; and in the Hindi verses ascribed to Gorakhnatha, we find the nathas interpreting the ideas of Persian sufi poets with remarkable similarity.[1]

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[1] Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi, *Rushd Nama* (Jhajhar, 1896-97), pp. 15-16; *Alakh Bani*, Translation, pp. 60-61.

[2] A.K. Banerjea, *Philosophy of Gorakhnath* (Gorakhpur, 1961), pp. 54-55.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 195.

The sufis identify Creation with the self-manifestation of the Absolute. According to them, God declared, "I was a Hidden Treasure and I desired to be known, therefore I created Creation that I might be known." The ontological command of God expressed in the Qur'an by "Be" *(kun)*[2] is inseparably linked with His will. Ibn 'Arabi points to three stages in the whole process of creation. "First, there arises in the One-Absolute, self-consciousness—or knowledge (*'ilm*)—and the permanent archetypes appear in the Divine Consciousness. This marks the birth of the possible Many . . . Then, in the second place, there arises the Will based on this Knowledge to bring out the archetypes from the state of non-existence into the state of existence. Then, on the basis of this Will, the Command—"Be" (*kun*)—is issued, and thus the world is created."[3]

Hindu cosmogonical and cosmological theories differ from school to school and many theories are hybrid mixtures of the doctrines of different schools and their branches. Gorakhnath believes that the urge for self-expression in Perfect Existence is responsible for the entire creative activity, and that the triad or triplicity of knowledge, will and action, or *bij, nad* and *vindu* is the basis of the origin of Creation. The feminine element also plays an important part in the process of Creation as explained by Ibn 'Arabi. He regards Reality as both Father and Mother; "the Reality is passive *(munfa'il)* in so far as it manifests itself in the form of a 'passive' thing, while in the form of the 'active' (agent) it is active."[4] The natha siddhas give prominence to the interplay of *Sakti* (Mother) and *Siva* (Father). The Divine *Sakti*, as conceived by Gorakhnath and the siddha-yogis, is *Sat-Cit-Ananda-mayi Mahasakti* i.e. self-manifesting, self-diversifying, all-harmonising, all-unifying, ever active dynamic *Sat-Cit-Ananda*, the fundamental concept indicating the nature of Absolute Reality (Parabrahma) in the Absolute

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[1] *Alakh Bani*, pp. 98-131.

[2] *Qur'an*, chapter, 3, verse 46.

[3] Toshihiko Izutsu, *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism* (Tokyo, 1966), part I, p. 189.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 195.

[5] *Philosophy of Gorakhnath*, pp. 79-81.

Experience.[1]

In Ibn 'Arabi's world view the ontological process of Creation is perpetual; the same eternal process of annihilation and re-creation is repeated with every movement. Under the kaleidoscopic scene of perpetual change and transformation there is always a Reality which is eternally "one."[2] Gorakhnath holds that the temporal process of creation and dissolution, of evolution, and involution, has no absolute beginning or end in time.[3]

Sufis of Ibn 'Arabi's school believe that "man" is an epitome of the whole universe; he is a microcosm. Each individual man is a mirror of the Absolute, reflecting the Absolute and nothing else, although the reflected images vary from person to person according to the individual capacities of different men.[4] Gorakhnatha says, "The yogi who experiences the whole cosmic system (comprising all animate and inanimate existences) within the individual body is the perfect knower (truth-realiser) of the body (*pinda*)". The macrocosm is realisable in the microcosm. The Cosmic Whole pervaded by One Spirit is manifested in every individual form.[5]

Fana (self-annihilation) and *baqa* (self-subsistence) to which it leads, are the main goal of the sufi life. *Fana* implies the passing away from all that is other than God and *baqa* means the ontological consciousness of subsisting in the Divine Essence. The process does not mean the loss of one's own individual essence; a red-hot iron in fire retains the properties of iron but does not become fire. The supreme ideal of a common Hindu is the attainment of *moksha* or *mukta* (deliverance) from the sorrows of earthly existence. Gorakhnatha differs from the general Hindu ideal; he thinks that sorrows impel the finite spirit to struggle against all kinds of limits and bondages and help the self to advance towards its ultimate realisation of Sivahood. The main ideal of a yogi is *samrasakarana;* in this state, although he lives and moves amidst diversity and change as far as finite material things are concerned, inwardly he dwells in the realm of blissful and changeless spiritual Unity.[1] Not only does a natha realise the identity of himself and all existence with Siva or Brahma and experience the whole universe within himself, but he becomes a complete master of all physical forces in the universe. The belief that a yogi neither dies nor is incarnated appealed to sufis as they found it had much in common with their own goal of *fana* and *baqa*.[3]

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[1] *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism*, part I, pp. 212-13.

[2] *Philosophy of Gorakhnath*, pp. 80-87.

[3] *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism*, part I, pp. 212-13.

[4] *Philosophy of Gorakhnath*, pp. 201-02.

The nathas, siddhas and yogis made their intellectual influence felt upon sufis through a *hatha-yogic* treatise entitled *Amrita Kunda*. It was translated from Sanskrit into both Arabic and Persian as *Hauzu'l Hayat* by an eminent Muslim scholar, Qazi Ruknu'd Din of Samarqand, with the collaboration of a Tantric brahman he converted on a visit he appears to have made to Lakhanuti (Bengal) some time between 1209 and 1217. This work was studied continuously by sufis; Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi used to teach it to one of his eminent disciples named Shaikh Sulaiman Mandawi.[4] Its re-translation by the famous Shattari saint, Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus (1500-1563), enhanced its popularity further, and the author of *Dabistan i-Mazahib*[5] (written in the middle of the seventeenth century), who had himself come in contact with eminent yogis of his time and read their literature, found *Amrita Kund* and *Hauzu'l Hayat* endowed with singular importance.

The framework of the natha yogi discipline is based mainly on symbols which the sufi poets writing in Hindi borrowed to interpret their own mystic experience. Indian sufis were Persian speaking, but they often used local languages for conversing with local people and for writing poetry; the early Chishti sufis Shaikh Farid'ud Din Ganj i-Shakar and Hamidu'd Din Nagauri (*c*. 1192-1274) wrote verses in the local language, and their example was followed by their disciples, some of whom made important contributions to the poetry of many regional languages.[6] In 1379-83 Maulana Dawud, [the disciple of Shaikh Zainu'd Din who was a nephew of Shaikh Nasiru'd Din

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[1] *Ibid*, pp. 246-49.

[2] *Rushd Nama*, p. 15.

[3] *Lata'if i-Quddusi*, p. 41.

[4] It is believed to have been written by Muhsin Fani but in fact it seems to have been written by Zu'lfaqar Ardastani.

[5] *Dabistan i-Mazahib* (Lucknow, 1904), p. 182.

[6] *Alakh Bani*, pp. 115-116; *Sururu's Sudur* (Ms. Aligarh University) pp. 50-51, 69, 74, 303.

Chiragh Dehli], wrote the Hindi *Chandayan*. It describes the earthly love of Lorak and Chanda in verse, but from the time it was written down to the seventeenth century it was recognised as a masterpiece of Divine Truth and Divine Love.[1] The *khanqah* of Shaikh Ahmad 'Abdu'l Haq (died 1434) at Rudauli, about 80 miles east of Lucknow, was a clearing-house for sufi and natha yogi ideologies. Shaikh Ahmad 'Abdu'l Haq belonged to the Sabiri[2] branch of the Chishti order; and his long travels, particularly in Bengal, had imbued him with natha yogi ideologies.[3] His disciples and successors took a keen interest in the natha yogi discipline. Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus, who was a disciple of Shaikh 'Ahmad Abdu'l Haq's grandson but considered himself to have been initiated by the spirit of Shaikh Ahmad 'Abdu'l Haq, wrote a comparative study of the ideologies of the natha yogis and the sufis entitled *Rushd Nama*. Shaikh Ruknu'd Din, the son of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi wrote a commentary on the Hindi verses of his father and other Chishti saints quoted in the *Rushd Nama* and reconciled them with the basic beliefs of the sufis. He wrote a short treatise in which he proved, on the basis of verses from the Qur'an and Traditions of Prophet Muhammad, that the prophets and apostles had been sent to India too, where they had propagated the Unity of God and moral principles in Indian languages, but that subsequently these teachings and truths were corrupted and idol worship was introduced. Thus the verses written by yogis and sannyasis, (Hindu ascetics) too, embodied teachings relating to Divine Unity and high moral principles.[4]

4. The natha siddhas were mystics with eclectic tendencies; they were not orthodox brahmans. They admitted members of all caste groups to their order, and Muslims, too, were attracted

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[1] *MT*, I, p. 260.

Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus had translated the work into Persian but the manuscript was already lost before he left Rudauli for Shahabad near Delhi in 1492.

[2] The founder of this branch was Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Din.

'Ali bin Ahmad Sabir (d. 1291) a disciple of Shaikh Faridu'd Din Ganj i-Shakar. Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Din established his centre of activity at Kalyar in western U.P.

[3] *Alakh Bani*, pp. 70-71.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 99-100.

to their fold. Eminent sufis of the Chishti, Firdausi and Shattari orders associated themselves with the yogis and listened to their discourses. The teachings of the nathas strengthened the sufi belief of *Wahdatu'l Wujud* but eminent sufis remained firm in their own beliefs. For instance, they never adopted the typical Indian doctrine of transmigration of souls, of incarnation *(hulul)*. Like Ibn 'Arabi, they even regarded ontological experience known as *unio mystica* incompatible with their system.[1]

The eclecticism of the natha influenced Muslim society in many other ways and encouraged the development of syncretic tendencies and movements in Islam. A group of nathas claimed that all prophets and apostles were disciples of Gorakhnath; and that Muhammad himself was brought up by Gorakhnath, whom they called Baba Rain or Baba Raina Hajji.[2] When they were with Muslims they offered prayers and fasted. In the company of Hindus they worshipped idols.[3] The followers of Shah Madar (*c.* 1315-1436) lived like yogis and Hindu ascetics. A section of the followers of Makhdum Jahaniyan Saiyid Jalal Bukhari (1308-1384), who lived in Uch (Sind), had also assimilated the practice of the natha yogis.[4] In the *Rushd Nama* by Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi, Gorakhnath is not the name of any individual but is interpreted sometimes in the sense of an Absolute Being, and sometimes in the sense of a Perfect Man, or "a man who has fully realised his essential oneness with the Divine Being in whose likeness he is made."[5]

The Hindu mystic tradition influenced sufism not only through the natha yogis, but through the Vaishnavite, by way of the Hindi music recited in the *sama'* of the sufis. Serious students of Ibn 'Arabi could find hardly any significant difference between the symbolism of love used by their great master and that of erotic Hindi poetry describing the love of Krishna and Radha. Worldly love was recognised as a stage leading to Divine love. Shaikh 'Abdu'l Wahid Bilgrami (1510-1608), an eminent sufi and the author of several standard works on sufism, went to the extent of compiling a Persian dictionary, entitled *Haqa'iq i-Hindi,*[1] to establish the relevance of the mystic symbolism of the Hindu Vaishnavite poetry to Islam.

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[1] S.A.A. Rizvi, Sufis and Nath Yogis in Mediaeval Northern India. *Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia* (Sydney), Vol. 7, Nos. 1 and 2, p. 133.

[2] *Dabistan i-Mazahib*, pp. 179-80.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 214-15.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 214-15.

[5] *Alakh Bani*, pp. 104-05.

These developments paved the way for a new wave in the *Sant* tradition, which became very popular. Both Kabir and Nanak are true representatives of this religious milieu. The attempts to reconcile orthodox Sunnism with sufism were unable to find a solution either to purely religious or to sociological problems. Sufic traditions had already gone a long way in denouncing the 'ulama for their worldliness and lack of understanding of the true spirit of Islam. Both the 'ulama and the sufis opposed to the school of Ibn 'Arabi mobilised the support of the rulers and of the administrative machinery against these sufis with a broader ideology, but persecution did not solve the problem. The idea gained ground that the peace and prosperity of the universe depended solely on the sufis.

Hikmat ul-Ishraq

The contradiction between the approach of sufis based on illumination and intuition and the analytical reasoning of the falasifa was to some extent resolved by the great sufi and philosopher Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi Maqtul (1155-1191). "One would commit a grave mistake," he argued, "if one thought that one could become a philosopher (literally: a member of the 'people of Wisdom') by dint of studying books only, without treading the path of Sanctity (i.e. *via mystica*) and without having immediate experience of spiritual lights. Just as a walker of the path of Sanctity (i.e. a mystic) who lacks the power of analytic thinking is but an imperfect mystic, so is a researcher (of the Truth), (i.e. a philosopher,) lacking the immediate experience of the divine mysteries but an imperfect and insignificant philosopher."[2] Henry Corbin compares Suhrawardi to a combination of St. Thomas Aquinas and Jakob Boehme, in the context of Islam.[3]

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[1] Translated into Hindi by the present author and published by Nagri Pracharni Sabha, Kashi (Benares), 1957.

[2] *See* Henry Corbin, *Oerres Philosophiques Et Mystiques* (Paris, 1952), I-II, *Prolegomene*.

[3] Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi* (London, 1969), pp. 17-18.

The philosophy of Suhrawardi is known as *Hikmat ul-Ishraq* (Philosophy of Illumination). It seeks to integrate "Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy with Zoroastrian angelogy and Hermetic ideas" and is designed to place "the whole structure within the context of sufism."[1] In the introduction to his book named *Hikmat ul-Ishraq*, Suhrawardi says:

> "The procedure of the master of philosophy, the divine Plato was the same, and the sages who preceded Plato in time, like Hermes, the father of philosophy, followed the same path. Since sages of the past, because of the ignorance of the masses, expressed their sayings in secret symbols *(rumuz)*, the refutations offered against them have concerned the exterior of these sayings and not their real intentions. And the *ishraqi* wisdom, the foundation and basis of which are the two principles of light and darkness as established by the Persian sages like Jamasp, Farshadshur, and Buzurjmihr, is among these hidden, secret symbols. One must never think that the light and darkness which appear in our expressions are the same as those used by the infidel Magi or the heretical Manichaeans, for they finally involve us in idolatry *(shirk)* and dualism."[2]

At the age of thirty-eight, this revolutionary thinker had to pay for his formulation with his life; but he had already completed nearly fifty works of outstanding merit in Arabic and Persian. His ideas found great popularity with Iranian scholars, and helped some *hakims* or wisemen of Iran to become philosopher, scientist, mathematician, astronomer and above all sufi, all combined in one.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Ishraqi philosophy came to be studied in India, mainly because of the works of Nasiru'd Din Tusi (1201-1274) and Jalalu'd Din Dauwani (1427-1521). The most prominent of the disciples of Dauwani to come to India was Mir Saiyid Rafi'u'd Din, Safavi, a descendant of Mir Mu'inu'd Din, the author of a celebrated Quranic commentary. Another of his ancestors was Shaikh Safiu'd Din 'Abdu'r Rahman; the descendants of Mir Saiyid Rafi'u'd Din called themselves the Safai Saiyids after him. The

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[1] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi Maqtul in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, edited by M.M. Sharif, I (Wiesbaden, 1963), p. 379.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 377.

Mir was born at Shiraz. He studied philosophy under al-Dauwani, who, out of consideration for his noble ancestry, used to go to his house to teach him. He learnt *hadis* under Shamsu'd Din Muhammad ibn 'Abdu'r Rahman Sakhawi, of Egypt. Mir Rafi'u'd Din reached Gujarat while Sultan Sikandar Lodi was reigning, and was invited by him to Agra.[1] From his arrival to his death in 1547-48, his influence over contemporary rulers never waned. The Lodis, the Mughals and the Surs successively sought his guidance; all of them made gifts to him. In India he kept his rational faculties subdued and supported the 'ulama in strengthening the hands of the *shari'a*. He was one of those theologians who are said by 'Abbas Khan Sarwani to have persuaded Sher Shah Sur (1538-45) to break his pledge of safe-conduct to Raja Puran Mal of Rai Sen.[2] He supported Makhdumu'l Mulk in the persecution of Shaikh 'Ala'i and the Mahdawis.[3]

Abu'l Fazl Gazruni, another eminent Ishraqi scholar, educated at the end of the fifteenth century several eminent scholars; one of these was Shaikh Mubarak Nagauri.[4] These philosophers were also profound scholars of Muslim theology and, as their influence grew in the fourth and fifth decade of the 16th century, they posed a serious threat to the dogmatism of the court 'ulama.

Theological Literature

The Syrian theologian Ibn Taymiyya, who tried to undermine the influence of the sufis and rejected *taqlid*, seems to have had no noticeable impact in India. One of his disciples, 'Abdu'l 'Aziz Ardveli, came to Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's court, where, like all foreign scholars, he found a warm welcome.[5] He seems to have exercised his influence only so far as to mislead the Sultan about the importance of the descendants of the 'Abbasid Caliphs, then leading the life of paupers in Egypt, whose name the Sultan exploited for political reasons. The *ijtihad* of Ibn Taymiyya neither suited the 'ulama nor the sufis in India. Indeed, an eminent traditionalist, Maulana Raziu'd Din Saghani, flourished as early as the thirteenth century in

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[1] *AA*, pp. 251-52.

[2] 'Abbas Khan Sarwani, *Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi* (Dacca, 1964), p. 191.

[3] *MT*, I, pp. 394-402.

[4] Abu'l Fazl, *A'in i-Akbari*, III (Lucknow, 1893), p. 203.

[5] *Voyages d' Ibn Battutah*, III, p. 253.

India. Maulana Kamalu'd-Din Zahid, who lived in the time of Balban, gave regular lectures on *hadis*[1] but the example of Saghani was not emulated in subsequent centuries. 'Ulama only served the government and struggled for supremacy through intrigue. By the end of the fourteenth century some sufis too had sunk to this way of life.

Interest in the study and compilation of *hadis* was revived in India in the sixteenth century, mainly through the influence of Ibn Hajar al Haitami, the celebrated Shafi'i jurist, who was born about 909/1504 in Egypt and in 940/1534 finally settled at Mecca.[2] Till his death in 974/1567 he paid unceasing attention to teaching, and to producing works of outstanding merit relating to *hadis*, and fiqh and Shi'i-Sunni polemics. He also wrote about the signs by which the advent of a Mahdi could be recognized, hoping to expose false claims of adventurers who were tempted to assume that title in different parts of the Islamic world. Of his polemical works, *al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa fi'l Radd ala Ahl al-Bida'wa'l Zandaqa*, mainly directed against the Shi'is, gave a new impetus to the Shi'i-Sunni conflicts.

Among the Indian scholars who studied under him, the most prominent was Shaikh 'Ali Muttaqi (d. 975/1567), the author of *Kanzu'l 'Ummal* and an inveterate enemy of the Mahdawis.[3] His disciple Shaikh Muhammad b. Tahir of Patan (d. *c*. 980/1573) was also a distinguished traditionalist and throughout his life tried to eradicate the influence of the Mahdawis and the Isma'ili Bohras of Gujarat.[4] Shaikh 'Abdu'l Wahhab Muttaqi, another disciple of Shaikh 'Ali Muttaqi, possessed an encyclopaedic knowledge of theological disciplines. He also struggled against the influence of the Mahdawis of Gujarat for some time but ultimately went to Mecca in 1556, and apart from a visit to India in 1568-69, remained there till he died.[5]

His teachings obtained considerable popularity in India through the works of his distinguished pupil Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dihlawi (1551-1642). The disciples of Ibn Hajar and Shaikh 'Ali Muttaqi re-oriented Sunni orthodoxy and scholarship; but interest in *hadis* in sixteenth century India was invigorated mainly through works written in Persian, of which *Rauzatu'l Ahbab* was the most important. This was written by Amir Jamalu'd Din Atau'llah bin Fazlu'llah al-Husaini al-Dashtaki, the celebrated divine of the court of Sultan Husain Mirza Baiqara of Herat (1469-1526) in 1484. It comprises the biography of Muhammad, of the first three Caliphs, of 'Ali and of the twelve Imams. Its detailed biographies of the twelve Imams of the Isna 'Ashari sect made the work controversial, though the author himself was an orthodox Sunni. However, Makhdumu'l Mulk Mulla 'Abdu'llah Sultanpuri, the most influential 'alim of sixteenth century India, pronounced it an exceedingly mischievous work. This did not undermine its importance, for it was widely read in India. The list of manuscripts of it in the libraries of the world is quite long. Mahmud al-Maghnisawi translated it into Turkish, and it was printed in Constantinople[1] in 1268/1852. The only other work which came near to it in popularity was the *Madariju 'n Nubuwah* of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi.[2]

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[1] *AA*, p. 72.
[2] *EI*, new, III, pp. 778-79.
[3] *MRM*, pp. 135-42.
[4] *Ibid*, pp. 143-44.
[5] *Ibid*, pp. 144-48.

Kamalu'd Din Husain bin 'Ali Wa'iz Kashfi, another luminary of the court of Sultan Husain Mirza, also made a very deep impact upon the intellectual Muslims as well as upon simple folk. He was a brother-in-law of the celebrated sufi and poet Nuru'd Din 'Abdu'r Rahman Jami and was a popular preacher in Herat. He commenced to write a commentary on the Qur'an in Persian entitled *Jawahir-al Tafair li Tuhfat al-Amir* but could not proceed beyond the first four surahs (chapters). After abandoning the attempt to compile this work, he put together, between 1492 and 1494, a concise Persian commentary entitled *Mawahib i-'aliyyah* which is popularly known as *Tafsir i-Husaini*.[3] The work obtained immense celebrity, and manuscripts of it are in every oriental library. It was translated into Turkish and Pushtu, and later into Urdu.

The *Rauzatu'sh Shuhda*, biographies of Muhammad and of 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Husain and his other companions, which Kashfi wrote about 1502-03, reinvigorated popular interest in the achievements and martyrdom of 'Ali, and his descendants. It was also translated into Turkish, and several abridgments of the work were made for popular use and given the title of *Dih Majlis*.[1]

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[1] C.A. Storey, *Persian Literature—A Bio-Bibliographical Survey* (London, 1927-53), Fasciculus I, pp. 189-91.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 194.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 12-13.

The Isna 'Ashari Shi'is

By the end of the fifteenth century, the Isma'ili movement had lost its momentum; the Isna 'Ashari Shi'is gained increasing importance. They, unlike the Isma'ilis, believe that Imam Ja'far Sadiq's son Imam Muhammad Baqir (d. 733 or 737) was the real successor of his father. Four other Imams succeeded Imam Muhammad Baqir, and the twelfth successor of 'Ali, according to the Isna 'Ashari Shi'i belief was Muhammad al-Mahdi al-Hujja, who is said to have been withdrawn by God from the eyes of men in 874 by disappearing in the crypt of the great mosque at Samarra in Iraq. He is believed by the Shi'is to be still living, and to be the *Qa'im al-Zaman* (the Master of the Time) and the *Muntazar* (the expected Imam). In due course, it is believed, he will appear as Mahdi, conquer the whole world and restore Islam to its purity.

Being a minority, persistently hounded by the orthodox Sunnis, the Shi'is felt obliged to adopt *taqiya* as a basic principle of their religion. There are many minor differences between the forms of prayers, fasting and other religious practices of the Sunnis and those of the Shi'is. Of special significance for the Shi'is is devotion to the family of Muhammad *(ahl al-bait* or *'itra)*. In accordance with their version of the "Farewell Sermon" Muhammad is said to have declared, "God has given two safeguards to the world, His book and the Prophet's *'itra*."

The hardships which the Imams suffered, particularly the martyrdom of the third imam Husain al Shahid and his associates on the battlefield of Karbala (Iraq) on 10 Muharram 61/10 October 680, are constantly kept green in the memory of the Shi'is by the organization of processions on the first ten days of the month of Muharram, particularly on the tenth day. Consequently, the Shi'is regard the first three successors of Muhammad, their supporters, and all the Umayyad and the 'Abbasid Caliphs as usurpers and therefore always seek to disassociate themselves from their activities. The practice is known as *tabarra*.

The movement made considerable headway in Persia, parts of which from the beginning of Islam had come to regard 'Ali as the greatest hero of Islam, endowed with divine attributes.[1] After the liquidation of the 'Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad in 1258, the Isna 'Ashari Shi'ism gained considerable popularity in Iraq and Iran because of the prestige which the Shi'i thinker and astronomer, Nasiru'd Din Abu Ja'far al-Tusi, enjoyed at the court of the Mongol Hulagu (1256-65). He re-interpreted Isna 'Ashari Shi'i teachings in his Persian philosophical treatises entitled *al-Fusul* and *Ausafu'l-Ashraf.*

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[1] *Ibid*, pp. 212-213.

Ghazan Mahmud, the Ilkhanid Mongol ruler of Iran (1295-1304), embraced the Shi'i faith after his conversion to Islam. He commenced the practice of giving precedence to the names of the descendants of Muhammad in all state records. His successor Uljaytu Khudabanda (1304-16) remained a Shi'i after his conversion to Islam, except for a brief period when he accepted Shafi'i tenets. Under them and their successors, the Saiyids (men who claimed to be the descendants of 'Ali and Fatima) obtained unprecedented prominence and respect.

Hilli (d. 1325), the most celebrated Shi'i scholar held an important post in the court of Uljaytu.[2] Of the works of Hilli, *Nahj al-Haq,* which he wrote in refutation of Sunnism, and *Minhaj al-Karama fi Ma'rifat al-Imama,*[3] in which he elucidated the significance of the doctrines of Shi'i *Imamas,* evoked immeasurable hostility from the Sunnis. Ibn Taymiyya, the outstanding Hanbali theologian and jurisconsult refuted Hilli's thesis in his voluminous *Minhaj al-Sunnat al-Nabwiyya fi Naqz Kalam al-Shi'a wa'l Qadariyya.*[4] A large number of Shi'i and Sunni scholars in succeeding centuries contributed to keeping the controversy alive and wrote refutations of one another's works, but most of them are nothing but pale copies of one or the other of those two major works; the subsequent polemical writings of both sides were no more than mutual insults.

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[1] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ithna* 'Ashari Shi'ism and Iranian Islam in *Religion in the Middle East* (Cambridge, 1969), II, pp. 96-118.

[2] At his suggestion Uljaytu ordered the names of twelve Imams and the formula 'Ali-wali Allah, to be engraved on the coins (S. Lane-Poole, *Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum,* VI, London, 1881.

[3] Brockelmann, C., *Geschichte der Arabisehen Litteratur* (Leiden, revised edition 1949), II, pp. 211-12.

[4] Cairo, 1321/1904, reprinted.

No authentic record of the beginning of the Isna 'Ashari Shi'i movement in India is available. Its adherents seem to have migrated to India from Iran and Iraq in the wake of the Mongol invasions of Sind and the Punjab in the thirteenth century. They appear to have mixed freely with the Mongols who were converted to Islam in India, and to have settled down in Delhi. Like all non-Turks, they were looked upon with distrust. Istikhan al-Dehlawi, who in 1326 wrote *Basatinu'l Uns*, a book of Hindu tales, gave to Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq the credit for making the sun of the Ja'fri faith (another name of Isna 'Ashari Shi'is) resplendent in India.[1] It seems that the Sunni immigrants from Iran and their associates also started the Muharram celebrations. The successor of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, who claimed to have reinvigorated orthodox Sunni practices in India, has made mention of the fact that the Shi'is, known as Rawafiz, compiled books and treatises relating to their own religion and invited the people to embrace it. They "openly reviled and foully abused" the rightly guided Caliphs and Muhammad's beloved wife 'A'isha Siddiqa[2] and all the eminent sufis. They referred to the Qur'an as full of interpolations made by the third Caliph, 'Usman. The Sultan sentenced extremist among them to death, publicly burnt their books and tried to dissuade Sunnis from practising Shi'i customs through severe censure and threats.[3] However, the repressive measures of Sultan Firuz seemed to have had no lasting effect.

After the invasion of Timur (1398 and 1399) closer contacts were established between Iran and India; Shi'is, and Sunnis with Shi'i leanings, migrated to the courts of the rulers of the provincial dynasties in India, and especially to the Deccan. The Shi'i immigrants successfully withstood the frowns and the fury of the orthodox Sunnis. Saiyid Muhammad Ashraf Jahangir Simnani (d. *c.* 1436) organized a number of debates with the Shi'is and tried to persuade them to embrace the Sunni faith.[4]

The movement made a considerable impact in the Deccan through Mahmud Gawan, an Irani who reached the Deccan in 1455 in the reign of the Bahmani Sultan Ahmad II (1435-57). Sultan Ahmad's successor, Sultan Humayun (1457-61), appointed him as his *wazir* but he did not enforce a Shi'i policy. Sectarian controversies kept the Muslims of Khurasan, Iran and neighbouring countries in great ferment throughout the fifteenth century. Khwaja 'Ubaidu'llah Ahrar (d. 1491), the celebrated Naqshbandi saint of Transoxiana, made hectic efforts to save contemporary Sunni society from disintegration, but he attained little success.[1] Sultan Husain Mirza Baiqara decided to make the Isna 'Ashari Shi'i faith the state religion, but he gave up his intention through the persuasions of his prime-minister, Mir 'Ali Shir Nawa'i.[2] The Shi'is received further encouragement with the establishment of the Safavid dynasty in Iran by Shah Isma'il Safavi ((1502-24). He made the Isna 'Ashari Shi'i faith the state religion of Iran and propagated it enthusiastically.

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[1] *Basatinu'l Uns* (Add 7717, Rieu, II, 752-53) f. 5b. Words *Khurshid i- Din i-sa'fari* clearly refer to the Shi'i faith.

[2] *Futuhat i-Firuz Shahi* (Aligarh, n. d.), p. 75.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 6-7.

[4] Saiyid Muhammad Ashraf Jahangir Simnani, *Lata'if i-Ashrafi* (John Rylands Library Manchester Ms. no. 679-ff. 416b-419a, 486b-487a.

Yusuf 'Adil Shah of Bijapur (1490-1510) was the first Indian ruler to make the Isna 'Ashari Shi'i faith the state religion. The names of the first three successors of Muhammad were replaced with the names of the twelve Imams in the *khutbah*. However, he kept extremists among the Shi'is in proper control and did not allow them to revile the companions of Muhammad. Firishta says that the 'ulama of the Ja'fri faith, those versed in the tenets of Abu Hanifa and those of the Shafi'i persuasion all lived in intimate friendship, and did not indulge in religious debates and polemics. They made the following line the maxim of their faith:

> "If that is better or this is superior, what has it to do with you, you are the knocker at the door; what have you to do with all this?"[3]

A new chapter in the history of the Isna 'Ashari Shi'i faith opened in the sixteenth century, with the immigration from Iran to the Deccan of Shah Tahir son of Shah Raziu'd Din. He belonged to a very influential family of Shi'i 'ulama. His ancestors, who had settled in Qazwin, had been preaching Isna 'Ashari Shi'i doctrines continuously for three hundred years. Shah Tahir's high proficiency in all branches of Islamic theology made him increasingly popular among the Shi'is of Egypt, Bukhara and Samarqand. Shah Isma'il grew envious of his influence, so he left for Goa, and thence went to Bijapur. Shortly after, he left on a pilgrimage to Mecca, Medina, Karbala and Najaf.[1] He came back to India, and reached Ahmad Nagar in 1521-22. There he succeeded in converting Burhan Nizam Shah (1508-54) to the Isna 'Ashari Shi'i faith.[2] Shah Tahir exercised considerable political influence in the Deccan. Through his efforts a reconciliation was made between Burhan Nizam Shah and Isma'il 'Adil Shah of Bijapur in 1523-24. As an envoy of Burhan Nizam Shah to the court of Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat (1526-37), he obtained great success because of his reputation as an 'alim.[3] He impressed the Sultan with his tactful handling of political matters, and his discussions with the 'ulama of Gujarat prepared the ground for the propagation of Isna 'Ashari Shi'ism there. A number of eminent scholars from Iran emigrated to Deccan and were warmly welcomed by Shah-Tahir. He died[4] in 1549. The Qutb Shahi rulers of Golkunda (S.E. Deccan) who ruled from 1512 to 1687 were also Shi'is. They gave considerable patronage to Shi'i emigrants from Iran.

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[1] *MRM*, p. 178.

[2] *Babur Nama* in *Mughul Kalin Bharat* by S.A.A. Rizvi (Aligarh, 1960), p. 573.

[3] Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Astarabadi, known as Firishta, *Gulshan i-Ibrahimi* or *Tarikh i-Firishta* (Lucknow, n.d.), *Maqala*, III, *Rauza*, II p. 11.

Mir Shamsu'd Din Iraqi, who had formerly professed to follow Nurbakhshiya tenets, a form of sufism based on the doctrines of Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi Maqtul, with strong Shi'i leanings, established the Isna 'Ashari faith in Kashmir. He was born in the village of Kund near Solghan in Iran, and in 1481 was sent as an envoy to the court of Sultan Husain Shah of Kashmir (1472-04) by Sultan Husain Mirza Baiqara of Herat. During his visit he prepared the ground for the propagation of the Shi'i faith by converting many Kashmiri Muslims to the Nurbakhshiyya order. After a stay of about eight years he left for Herat, returning to Kashmir about 1502 as an envoy of Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh's son Shah Qasim. During this visit he was able to convert Musa Raina, an important noble of Sultan Fath Shah II (1493-1514), to the Shi'i faith. Raina gave him money and land to erect a *khanqah* at Jaddibal, a suburb of Srinagar. Because of the opposition of the Sunni 'ulama and lack of support from Fath Shah, Mir Shamsu'd Din 'Iraqi left for Baltistan, where he converted a considerable number of Buddhists to the Shi'i faith. Shortly afterwards Musa Raina became prime-minister, and invited Mir Shamsu'd Din to come back to Kashmir, and through his efforts many Chak nobles embraced the Isna 'Ashari Shi'i faith. He died some time before 1533.

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[1] *Gulshan i-Ibrahimi*, *Maqala* III, *Rauza* II, pp. 111-12.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 113-14.

[3] *MT*, I, pp. 482-84; Letters of Shah Tahir d. 952 ff. 124a-124b in *Insha'* Shah Tahir al-Husaini (Rieu, I, 395a).

[4] *Gulshan i-Ibrahimi*, pp. 110, 114-18.

During the reign of Mirza Haidar Dughlat (1540-51), the Shi'is were mercilessly persecuted. The tomb of Mir Shamsu'd Din was desecrated and his son Shaikh Daniyal was imprisoned and later on beheaded.[1] However, soon after Mirza Haidar's death the Shi'i regained their power. Shaikh Abu'l Fazl says:

> "Owing to the Mirza's frigid and insipid bigotries, the result of imperfect development, the essentials for Kashmir, viz. unanimity and fidelity, found a bad market. And to this day there is an odour of bigotry about the Kashmiris."[2]

In the early years of Akbar's reign, Srinagar was the scene of some very bitter Shi'i-Sunni conflicts. In 1569-70 some bigoted Shi'is of Srinagar fatally wounded Qazi Habib, a Sunni fanatic. Before the Qazi died, Sultan Husain, the ruler of Kashmir, in accordance with the decision of the *muftis* sentenced the offenders to death. At that time Mirza Muqim Isfahani, Akbar's ambassador at the court of the Sultan, was living at Srinagar. He disagreed with the opinion of the *muftis* and handed them over to some bigoted Shi'is, who made short work of three or four of them. When Mirza and Mir Ya'qub Kashmiri, the ambassador of the Sultan, returned to Akbar's court with Sultan Husain's daughter, the matter was reported to the Emperor. Both the persons, upon the decision of Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and the 'ulama associated with him, were put to death in Fathpur.[3]

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[1] Qazi Nuru'llah Shustari, *Majali-su'l Muminin* (Tehran, 1881-82), pp. 313-19; *Gulshan i-Ibrahimi*, pp. 335-37; 'Abdu'l Wahhab Nuri, *Futuhat i-Kubrawiya* (Ms. Srinagar Research Library, no. 50) ff. 223b-230b.

[2] *AN*, I, p. 198.

[3] *MT*, II, pp. 124-25; Lowe, p. 128.

Babur, the founder of the Mughal empire in India, was a Sunni but he did not find any harm in donning the Shi'i cap in order to win the support of Shah Isma'il Safavi against his Uzbek enemies. Though he was a devoted follower of Shaikh 'Ubaidu' llah Ahrar, his relations with the Iranis remained cordial and a number of eminent Iranis, some of whom were Shi'is, migrated to India with him. His son Humayun was born of an Irani wife. After his accession to the throne of India, he showed favour to the Iranis. Humayun's brother Mirza Kamran, a staunch Sunni and his bitter rival, did not let slip a single opportunity to ridicule his elder brother's eclectic beliefs. Driven away from India by his Afghan adversary Sher Shah, Humayun married Hamida Banu Begum, a descendant of Shaikh Ahmad Jam Zhanda-pil (d. 1142) and later left for Iran in the hope of help from Shah Tahmasp Safavi (1524-76). It is said that Humayun embraced the Shi'i faith in Iran, but the evidence available is not conclusive.[1] It seems that he reviled the first three Caliphs, visited Shi'i shrines and offered prayers there.[2]

Of his Persian allies who accompanied him on his Qandahar and Kabul expeditions, some who were Shi'is, emigrated to India. Their presence was not generally relished by the orthodox Sunnis. Shaikh Hamid, an orthodox Sunni theologian who visited Humayun at Kabul, is said to have observed, "My king, I see that the whole of your army are rafzi (Shi'i)." Humayun replied, "Shaikh! Why do you say such a thing, and what have you to say about it?." He answered, "Everywhere the names of your soldiers are of this kind. I find they are all Yar 'Ali (friend of 'Ali) or Kashf 'Ali (slippers of 'Ali) Haidar 'Ali (lion of 'Ali), and I have not found a single man bearing the name of any other companion." Humayun indignantly dashed his drawing pencil to the ground and cried, "The name of my grandfather himself was 'Umar Shaikh and I khow no more than this."[3]

The success of the Isna 'Ashari Shi'i movement in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries had made the Saiyids[4] vulnerable to the attack of the orthodox Sunnis. Some orthodox sufis and 'ulama, though themselves Saiyids, denounced other Saiyids mercilessly. Saiyid 'Ali Tirmizi, who throughout his life preached orthodox Sunni beliefs among the Afghan tribes of the North West Frontier of India, used to say that anyone who had seen a Sunni Saiyid, a generous Mulla and a *qalandar* devoted to prayer had seen all the wonders of the world.[1]

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[1] Jauhar Aftabchi, *Tazkiratu'l Waqi'at* (Br. Mues. No. Add 16711). ff. 71b-72b. *See* different versions of the story in S.A.A. Rizvi, *Mughul Kalin Bharat, Humayun* (Aligarh, 1961), I, pp. 659-60.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 659-60.

[3] *MT*, I, p. 468.

[4] Descendants of 'Ali by his wife Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad.

He and his disciple Akhund Darweza found the root of the tendency to adopt the Shi'i faith in the *Jang Namas* (Accounts of 'Ali's warfare) and *Tazkira i-Maqatil* (Accounts of the martyrdom of Husain). The *Jang Namas*, according to him, unduly emphasised the achievements of 'Ali and were forgeries and concoctions of the Shi'is. Since the *Maqatil* condemned Yazid and his army as infidels, they too must have been forged.[2] Saiyid 'Ali Tirmizi was convinced that the main cause of the aberration of the Saiyids lay in their belief that 'Ali was superior to the first three Caliphs, in their pride of descent, and in their neglect of the piety and righteous deeds prescribed by the Sunni law. They initiated their children from an early age into such misbeliefs. However, despite all denunciations, the Saiyids continued to enjoy the respect of the Sunnis. One Mir Qasim, a Saiyid, obtained a singular success in converting the Tirahis to the Shi'i faith. Likewise the creed found great popularity among the Ningrahar tribe.[3]

The position of some of the eminent Saiyid families in the court of Humayun and Akbar was perplexing. The Saifi Saiyids of Qazwin were known as bigoted Sunnis in their own country. Mir Yahya b. 'Abdu'l Latif al-Hasani al-Saifi al-Qazwini and his son Mir 'Abdu'l Latif, were alleged to have been the leaders of the Sunnis of Qazwin. Shah Tahmasp imprisoned Yahya at Isfahan[4] where he died eighteen months later in 1555. Meanwhile Mir 'Abdu'l Latif withdrew to the mountains. Mir Yahya was known to Humayun, who had visited him at Qazwin and been much impressed by his learning. In the first year of Akbar's reign, 'Abdu'l Latif, with his talented son Ghiyasu'd-Din, arrived in India, and was appointed by Bairam Khan as Akbar's tutor. Abu'l Fazl says, "From his lack of bigotry and his broad-mindedness he was called in India a Shi'i and in Iran a Sunni. In fact he was journeying on towards the serene city of universal tolerance, and so the zealots of each sect used to censure him."[1]

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[1] *Makhzan al-Islam* (Ethe, 2633), f. 37a.

[2] Akhund Darweza, *Irshadu't Talibin* (Lucknow, 1885-86), p. 426.

[3] Akhund Darweza, *Tazkiratu'l Abrar Wa'l Ashrar* (Peshawar, 1960), pp. 110-13, 160, 199.

[4] *MT*, III, p. 98.

In the early part of Akbar's reign, the Shi'is lived outwardly like Sunnis and avoided conflicts with the strong Sunni elements in the administration. Bairam Khan is said to have held Shi'i beliefs, but the evidence is inconclusive. During his regency he exhibited sufficient respect to sufis and Sunni saints.[2] At the time of his dismissal in 1560 he was accused of undue favouritism to his supporters.[3] Indeed, he did reward all those who had helped him in the first part of Humayun's reign and in the course of his wanderings in Gujarat, Sambhal and Sind. The most prominent of these men was Shaikh Gada'i Kamboh. He was the eldest son of Shaikh Jamali Kamboh, a saint, a poet and the author of a well known biography of leading sufis entitled *Siyaru'l 'Arifin*. Jamali wrote panegyrics in Persian verse upon Babur and Humayun, which evoked the approval of those rulers. He accompanied Humayun on his expedition to Gujarat and died there in April-May 1536.

Shaikh Gada'i, who according to Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi closely followed the traditions of his father, was a favourite of Humayun.[4] After Sher Shah's victories, he left for Gujarat, and thence departed for Mecca. In Gujarat he had taken the risk of helping Bairam Khan against heavy odds. Early in Akbar's reign,[5] he came back to the Court from Gujarat. and was appointed the chief Sadr in place of Mir 'Abdu'l Ha'i.[6] By making this appointment, Bairam Khan paid his debt of gratitude, although Shaikh Gada'i, with his scholarship and prestige, deserved such a high post in his own right. Reliance upon the secondary sources, which state that

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[1] *AN*, II, pp. 19; Beveridge, II, p. 35.

[2] *AA*, p. 53.

[3] Letter of Akbar *AN*, II, pp. 106-10; Bev., II, pp. 161-67.

[4] *AA*, p. 229.

[5] *AN*, II, pp. 20-21; Bev., II, p. 36.

[6] *MT*, III, p. 273; Haig, pp. 378-79.

Shaikh Gada'i was a Shi 'i,[1] has led historians into strange errors. None of the scholars who call Shaikh Gada'i a shi'i seem to have paused to consider how and when Jamali's son embraced the Shi'i faith. Shaikh Gada'i seems to have fostered the interest of the Suhrawardis and the Chishtis, sometimes at the cost of the Shattaris. He was strongly opposed to Muhammad Ghaus of the Shattari *silsilah*. Badauni too, deeply resented the spectacular rise of Shaikh Gada'i who seems to have recklessly resumed the grants that the Afghan Shaikhzadas had[2] obtained from Sher Shah and his successors and bestowed them on his own favourites.[3] This made him unpopular with Afghan religious dignitaries. Doubts were cast on his genealogy, and on his name Gada'i (beggarly); and poets composed satires about him.[4]

The fall of Bairam Khan did not stop the immigration of the Shi'is to India. Even during the ascendancy of Makhdumu'l Mulk and Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, talented Shi'is continued to arrive from Iran. They would often make their mark first in Gujarat or in the Deccan, whence they would repair to the Mughal court. Generally they posed as sufis, and obtained assistance from other Iranis at the Court. A section of the Sunnis known as the *Tafzilis* who considered 'Ali as superior to all the companions of Prophet, also protected the Shi'is. Thus both the *Tafzili* and the Nurbakhshi doctrines served as a stage of transition from Sunnism to Isna 'Ashari Shiism.

The *Mafatihu'l i'jaz fi Sharh i-Gulshan i-Raz*, by Muhammad b. Yahya bin 'Ali al-Jilani al-Lahiji al-Nurbakhshi, written about 1473, presented sufism, Nurbakhshiyya principles, Isna 'Ashari beliefs and the Ishraqi *hikmah* as indistinguishable and weakened the hold of the orthodox Sunnis. However they were regularly hounded out by the Court *'ulama* and persecuted. Even their dead bodies were not spared. In 1566-67 Mir Murtaza Sharifi Shirazi,[1] a descendant of Mir Saiyid Sharif Jurjani and a distinguished and a pious scholar died. He was buried at Delhi in the neighbourhood of the tomb of Amir Khusrau. Later on the *sadr* (Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi), Qazi and Shaikhu'l Islam (Makhdumu'l-Mulk) represented to Akbar that Amir Khusrau was a native of India, and a Sunni, while Mir Murtaza was a native of Iraq and a Rafizi (Shi'i) and that consequently Amir Khusrau would find the company of Mir Sharif in his grave unpleasant. The Emperor ordered that the Mir's body should be taken out of the grave and buried elsewhere. This injustice, an outrage upon decency, was bitterly criticised even by Badauni, because of the respect that the Mir commanded during his lifetime. The scholars paid their tributes to the learning of the Mir by devising complimentary chronograms.[2]

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[1] Smith, p. 42. His conclusions, although baseless, are very interesting.

"The appointment of a Shi'a to a position so important naturally gave extreme offence to the orthodox Sunni courtiers, and had much to do with the subsequent fall of Bairam Khan, who was hated as being a Shi'a. Badaoni makes the elevation of Shaikh Gada'i the theme of his most bitter gibes and venomous puns."

Yet orthodox Sunnis such as Mushtaqi and Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq profusely extol both Bairam Khan and Shaikh Gada'i.

[2] See *Infra*.

[3] *Tuhfat-Akbar Shahi*, pp. 225.

[4] *MT*, II, pp. 30; Lowe, pp. 23-24.

The Mahdawi Movement

The Qur'anic verse "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of Prophets."[3] precluded all possibility of the advent of a new prophet, but the traditions, both true and false, forecast the advent of a Mahdi or a messiah. Similarly, some traditions also promise the advent of a *Mujaddid* or a renovator for each century. The signs and conditions of the Mahdi's coming, and even his physical appearence, were foretold in the first century of the Islamic era. Rulers and governing classes were naturally disturbed by prophecies indicating that the Mahdi would rule the whole world.[4]

By the beginning of the fifteenth century, expectations of the advent of the Mahdi engaged the attention of every Muslim thinker and increasingly upset the rulers. Scholars scrutinized the traditions relating to the advent of the Mahdi, while sufi poets inflamed the expectations of the masses through their verses.[1] Rulers consequently looked with suspicion upon every religious leader who happened to obtain some following. The foundation of the Safavid dynasty in Persia by Shah Isma'il Safavi who was descended from a sufi family, enhanced the apprehension of the rulers and the governing classes lest the sufis endanger their security. While the gullible Muslim masses were increasingly drawn towards all such adventurers, the governing classes became restive.

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[1] From Shiraz he went to Mecca where he studied under Ibn Hajar. From thence he reached Agra via the Deccan, and plunged himself into teaching. Both Badauni and Abu'l Fazl paid tributes to his learning and eminence in the rational and traditional sciences. *AN*, II, pp. 220-21; *MT*, III, pp. 320-21; Haig, pp. 442-43.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 99; Lowe, pp. 101-102.

[3] Chapter 33, Verse 40.

[4] *MRM*, p. 72.

In Firuz Shah's reign, one Rukn claimed to be a Mahdi,[2] but he did not arouse much response and was executed. Saiyid Muhammad, born at Jaunpur in 1443, who declared himself to be the Mahdi at Mecca in 901/1495-96, made a deep impact on his contemporaries in india. On his return from Mecca, a band of devoted followers rallied round him in Gujarat. His learning, piety and impressive personality strongly influenced everyone with whom he came in contact. Many did not believe him to be the promised Mahdi, but all readily accepted him as a "perfect guide" and a saint. His community lived in special settlements called *da'iras*, practising the ascetic self-denial and trust in God. Expelled from Gujarat, Saiyid Muhammad travelled through Jaisalmir, Nagaur, Sind and Qandahar until he reached Farah (south of Herat) where he died on 23 April 1505.[3] After his death, the Mahdawi *da'iras* in Gujarat, Sind and at Kalpi in Bundelkhand became immensely popular.

The execution of Shaikh 'Abdu'llah Niyazi and Shaikh 'Ala'i in Islam Shah's reign (1545-52) gave further momentum to the Mahdawi movement and it deeply influenced every section of society in the capital.[4] All who led a retired and ascetic life came to be suspected of entertaining Mahdawi beliefs, and were therefore marked out for the court 'ulama's displeasure.

Afghan soldiers and merchants provided many adherents to Mahdawism. In Akbar's early years these easily identifiable classes, generally not well affected to Mughal rule could easily be accused of disloyalty as well as of unorthodoxy. They tended to drift out of the Mughal domains to Gujarat and the Deccan, which thereafter became their principal centres; Gujarat after the Mughal conquest was less important. The Mahdawi community survives in Hyderabad, Mysore, and other towns of the Deccan but in Jahangir's reign there were still enough Mahdawis in the Panjab both to irritate the officers of government and inflame the rage of the holy Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi by their efforts to gain converts.

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[1] *MRM*, pp. 73-74.

[2] *Futuhat i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 7-8.

[3] *MRM*, pp. 76-95.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 122-30.

Proselytisation

The study of the process of conversion to Islam has been marred by deep prejudices, and studded with controversial judgements. The mediaeval Christian tradition presents the Arabian Muslims as offering the Qur'an with one hand, and the sword with the other. Muslim chroniclers, eager to glorify the splendour of their faith, and the magnificence of the monarchs whose deeds they commemorate, developed a convention of crediting these men with the destruction of "abodes of infidelity," the eradication of "the practices of polytheism" and the inducing of millions to "accept the honour of Islam" at the point of the sword. Muslim theologians see the spread of Islam as the inevitable result of its inherent excellence, aided by divine favour rather than by the efforts of ambitious rulers or the effects of economic or social pressures.

In contrast to these views, a Muslim apologetic literature arose in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was inspired by the liberal traditions of Europe; it sought to present the process of Islamisation as a purely peaceful movement, led by the sufis. In 1895, Sir Thomas Arnold's *Preaching of Islam* was written. It was followed by more detailed works, in which Muslim scholars sought to prove that it was not only the weakness of religious feeling, but the positive though peaceful efforts of sufis and merchants, that disseminated Islam.

While there can be no doubt that preaching played a considerable part in Islamisation, that phenomenon was neither exclusively the work of sufis and peaceable merchants, nor the mere concomitant of armed strength. Islamisation was a far more complex process. The eminent Chishti saint, Ja'far Makki al-Husaini, whose long life stretched from the close of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign to the early years of Sultan Bahlul Lodi's, advanced the following reasons why men might be induced to embrace Islam:

(i) fear of death;
(ii) fear lest their families be enslaved;
(iii) lust after *mawajib* and *ghanimah*;
(rewards and pensions, and booty);
(iv) the superstitious bigotry *(ta'ssub)* of their ancestral faiths; and,
(v) preachings of the Muslims.[1]

This most revealing analysis highlights all the major factors influencing conversions to Islam in India. Political pressures, for example, seem to have produced the conversion of the tribesmen of the western Punjab, who remained continuously under Muslim rule from the beginning of the eleventh century.[2] Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji (d. 1205-06), the enterprising conqueror of Bihar and Bengal, is said to have converted the chiefs of a tribe named Mij, which occupied the land between Lakhnauti and the Himalayan foothills, and to have named its paramount chief 'Ali Mij. Under 'Ala'u'd Din Khalji a Gujarat tribe led by Khusrau Jaharya embraced Islam, and a large section of the warlike Barwars of Gujarat followed him in the hope of better prospects. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq forcibly converted to Islam the surviving sons of the rulers of Kampili in the Deccan as well as his officials. Harihar and Bukka, who in 1336 founded the independent kingdom of Vijayanagara, were scions of this ruling dynasty. Under the influence of the sage Vidyaranya they were re-converted to the Hindu religion, but this case was an exception. Hindu society of those days did not allow reconversion, and those Hindus who had embraced Islam, irrespective of the circumstances under which they were forced to do so, had to continue to follow their new religion. A chief's conversion naturally led to the conversion of many, if not most, of his followers; therefore the Sultans and their officials did not fail to create conditions which could lead influential chiefs to embrace Islam.

Sultan Firuz Tughluq (1351-88) made public announcements that any infidel who recited the *kalimah*[3] and became a Muslim would by that act be exempted from *jizyah*. Crowds of people, says the Sultan in the Futuhat, responded to these enticements, and were not only exempted from *jizyah* after conversion, but also given robes of honour; and it further seems that their arrears of taxes were remitted. Brahmans had earlier been permitted exemption from *jizyah* but Sultan Firuz purported to regard this as the result of the deceit of the officials, and even accused them of concealing the exemption from previous sultans.[1] He adopted Barani's opinion that brahmans were "the key to the storehouse of infidelity." "The infidels only followed their lead; so the collection of *jizyah* from them should be given precedence."[2] The 'alims and the sufis agreed with the Sultan and urged him to exact *jizyah* from them. The brahmans protested; the Sultan was adamant; rich Hindus intervened in the end, and offered to pay *jizyah* on behalf of the brahmans. A concessional rate was ultimately fixed for them.[3]

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[1] *MRM*, p. 46.

[2] Political pressures were responsible for the Islamisation of the Khokkars of the Punjab at the end of the thirteenth century. See *Infra*.

[3] *Futuhat i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 20.

High caste Hindu prisoners of war, who would have found their restoration to the framework of their caste-system difficult and the process of expiation trying,[4] must have found it profitable to accept Islam. Hordes of Mongol captives embraced Islam to escape the vindictive persecution of the Muslims whose brethren they had ruthlessly slaughtered not long before, in the states behind the Hindu Kush as well as in the Punjab and Sind. Such converts were assigned separate living quarters known as Mughalpuras. Another well-known factor was the forced conversion of the Hindu girls whom the Muslims had started marrying from the beginning of the Arab[5] conquest of Sind by Muhammad bin Qasim. Many of the parents of these unfortunate girls might have accepted Islam in order not to lose touch with their daughters.

Preaching, known as *tazkir*, was generally organised in military camps in order to raise the morale of the Muslim soldiers;[6] Muslim preachers delivered sermons at public places, not to attract not-Muslims but only to re-vitalise piety among the Muslims.[1]

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[1] Shams Siraj 'Afif, *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi* (Calcutta, 1890), p. 302.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 382-83.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 384.

[4] Sachau, E.C., *Alberuni's India* (Indian reprint, 1964), pp. 162-63.

[5] From 'Ala'u'd Din Khalji's reign, the number of forced marriages increased greatly.

[6] Minhaj Siraj started his early career in India as a preacher in the army; the *tazkirs* were regularly held in Ramazan: *Tabaqat i-Nasiri*, p. 175.

The preachers used to be 'alims such as Maulana Nur Turk or Minhaj al-Siraj, the author of the *Tabaqat i-Nasiri*. 'Alims from the *madrasas* were always available to take up the post of a preacher, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the number of *madrasas* attached to the mosques began to increase in rural areas, the influence of teachers from these *madrasas* must have caused some Hindus in rural areas to become Muslims. The fifteenth and sixteenth century writings of Kabir, Nanak and other Hindu saints mention mainly *qazis* and *mullas* as being concerned in proselytising activities.

Professor Muhammad Habib thinks that "the acceptance of Islam by the city-workers was a decision of local professional groups, and that in making their decisions they were naturally more concerned with mundane affairs and their position in social order than with abstract theological truths."[2] Professor Nizami agrees with the above conclusion but laments that "it under-rates the moral and spiritual forces released by the Muslim mystics."[3] Solitary cases of conversion of families under the miraculous influence of saints[4] are recorded in the hagiological literature, but the fourteenth century Chishti records tend to show that the Chishtis did not indulge in proselytising activities. They were given to meditation and the fostering of piety and righteousness among the Muslims themselves. Shaikh Nizamu'd Din Auliya believed that the hearts of the Hindus were not changed by sermons, but by the company of pious men.[1]

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[1] Nur Turk was a well known preacher of the thirteenth century (*Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, p. 213). Minhaj Siraj also preached in public (*Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, p. 205).

[2] Introduction to Elliot and Dowson's *History of India*, II, (Aligarh 1952, revised), p. 59. In the introduction to this book, Professor Habib says, "But even a cursory glance at the homelands of the Delhi Empire, where the Musalmans number only about 10%, will show that there were no conversions in the countryside and the conversions in the *qasbas* and cities were confined to the lower non-caste groups, such as weavers, elephant-drivers, butchers, fishermen and the like, whom the *Manusmriti* classified as non-caste groups and who were denied the privilege of living within the cities and walled towns. These conversions probably took place on the basis of the decision of the local caste group" (p. XIII). Although members of non-caste groups were converted to Islam from time to time, there is no basis for the surmise that such conversions took place in thirteenth to seventeenth centuries. The proud Turks were not even interested in native Indian Muslims, who worked as weavers or in the occupations.

[3] K.A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century* (Aligarh, 1961), pp. 321-22.

[4] Conversion of a thief because of the miraculous personality of Shaikh Faridu'd Din Ganj Shakar's mother (*Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, p. 136).

The Suhrawardi saint, Shaikh Jalalu'd Din Tabrezi (died *c.* 1244-45) is said to have demolished a temple at Devatala or Deva Mahal in Northern Bengal, established a *khanqah* there and converted a large number of Hindus and Buddhists to Islam. Half the revenue of Deva Mahal was subsequently assigned to the maintenance of the *langar* (soup-kitchen) of his *khanqah.*[2] Conversions thus made could not be ascribed to the moral or spiritual force of Islam, but were analogous to conversions by force.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the alleged spiritual influence of Islam could not have reached the common Hindus from the *khanqahs*. The affluent Suhrawardi *khanqahs* of those days were not interested in common Muslims at all.[3] While it is true that Shaikh Ruknu'd Din Multani (died 1335), the celebrated Suhrawardi saint, who was on familiar terms with the Khaljis and the early Tughluqs, made himself a channel for the petitions of Muslims seeking favour of the Sultans,[4] it is most probable that only high officials had access to the Shaikh.

Chishti *khanqahs* which opened their doors to all classes of Muslims, allowed yogis to attend, but no Chishti hagiological text mentions visits to *khanqahs* by any substantial numbers of Hindus. What seem to have made a deep impact upon the Hindus were not *khanqahs*, but the tombs of saints, both genuine and fictitious. For example, the fifteenth century traveller and saint Jamali found the Hindus living in and around Ajmer prostrating themselves before the tomb of Khwaja Mu'inu'd Din Chishti and making large offerings to its keepers, and thought that many Hindus accepted Islam because of the blessings of the tomb.[5] Simple Hindus usually did not discriminate between the spiritual power of the idols they worshipped and the tomb of Muslim sufis; the popularity of any tomb would continue to increase, so long as people continued to imagine that their wishes were being granted as a result of the tomb's *barakah* (blessing). Popular devotion to the tombs must have given opportunity to their keepers to convert those Hindus who believed that tombs, not idols, helped them in their difficulties. The families of such converts would have been left with two alternatives; either to outcaste them, or to accept Islam *en bloc.* Many would have preferred the latter course for the political and economic advantages it offered.

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[1] *Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, pp. 150, 195-97.

[2] Jamali, *Siyaru'l 'Arifin* (Delhi, 1893), p. 171.

[3] *Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*, p. 151.

[4] Amir Khurd, *Siyaru'l Auliya* (Delhi, 1885), pp. 168-69.

[5] *Siyaru'l 'Arifin*, p. 13.

This pattern of Islamisation was not much different from that which followed the Islamisation of Hindu chiefs and tribal leaders through political or economic pressures. It was this section of newly converted Muslims which in its turn must have converted to Islam the low caste men who served them. The egalitarian spirit of Islam which, according to some modern Muslim scholars,[1] was the main factor in the conversion of low caste Hindus, carried no weight with Muslim immigrants, nor with Indian born Muslims, whose typical representative is the proud and exclusive Ziyau'd Din Barani.

Although both sufis and 'alims looked with horror at the wandering darveshes, known as qalandars, jwaliqis, or Haidaris,[2] these men's contacts with all sections of the Indian population might have converted some Hindus and Buddhists to Islam, particularly in Bengal, where the craze for Tantricism and Yoga had propagated credulous reverence for anyone claiming to teach hidden mysteries, or work miracles.

The idea of enlisting sufis as missionaries was seriously considered by Muhammad bin Tughluq, who felt himself obliged to resort to several devices to break the clique of the sufis and 'ulama. He asked an eminent Chishti saint named Maulana Shamsu'd Din Yahya, what business a scholar like him had in the capital? Why did he not go to Kashmir, reside in the temples there, and invite people to embrace Islam? The Maulana died, however, before the Sultan could force him to go to Kashmir,[3] and the Sultan's scheme was abandoned.

[1] I.H. Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent* (The Hague, 1962), pp. 79-82.

[2] *MRM*, pp. 29-33.

[3] *Siyaru'l Auliya*, p. 220.

In the fifteenth century, the penetration of the disciples of Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Daula Simnani to various parts of India seems to have changed the attitude of several Chishti saints, such as the celebrated Saiyid Muhammad Gisu Daraz, who claimed to have persuaded Hindus to accept Islam.[1] The well-known and successful attempt of the brother of Shaikh Makhdum i-Jahaniyan (1308-84), the famous Suhrawardi saint, to procure the death of Nawahun, a petty Hindu officer of Uch, for apostasy, on the pretence that his conventional enquiry after the dying Shaikh's health implied his acceptance of Muhammad as a prophet,[2] was not only unreasonable, but a pattern of future militancy.

It seems, therefore, that while conversions to Islam might well have proceeded sporadically in the first century and a half of the rule of the Delhi Sultans, the attitude both of the state and of many orders of sufis began to change towards the end of the fourteenth century. While the Chishtis still insisted that intercourse with Hindus be conducted in a polite and decorous manner, and were far from brutish crudity, others, mainly such immigrants to India as the followers of Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Daula Simnani, tended to be more outspoken in advocating the superiority of Islam, and in mobilising the strength of the state in its support. Even Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi became the tool of the 'ulama, and wrote letters to Sultan Sikandar Lodi,[3] Babur[4] and Humayun[5] asking them to re-invigorate the *shari'a*. He advised Babur to make the revenue administration conform with the practices of the first four Caliphs, and to reserve all high offices for Muslims. Hindus were to be given no posts in the finance and revenue departments, but reduced to the status of a revenue and *jizyah* paying class, and restricted to their traditional trades and professions. Indeed, his extravagant views are the result of a sufi's inexperience in the political art.

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[1] *Jawami'u'l Kilam*, ff. 87a-90a.

[2] *MRM*, pp. 56-57. Badauni suggests that if a *kafir* promises to become Muslim, he should be asked to honour his promise forthwith. If he does not, he should be put to death. If a woman behaves in this manner she should be imprisoned and released only when she becomes a Muslim. He then quotes approvingly the story of Raju Qattal and Nawahun, adding that Sultan Firuz forced Nawahun to become a Muslim. (Badauni, *Najatu'r Rashid*, Delhi Miscellaneous 34, Ms. India Office, London, ff. 41a-b) Nawahun had not promised to become a Muslim, but had made a formal statement that Makhdum Jahaniyan was the seal of the saints in the same way as Muhammad was the Seal of the Prophets. See *Infra*,

[3] *Maktubat i-Quddusiya* (Delhi, 1871), p. 44-46.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 335-37.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 338.

Changing Attitude of the Hindus towards the Muslims

When al-Biruni visited India early in the eleventh century, he found Hindus reluctant to come in contact with Muslim scholars. An invincible sense of their own superiority,[1] as al-Biruni points out, was not the only cause of their insularity; the plundering raids of Mahmud of Ghazni had engendered a sense of insecurity in them. By the time of Firuz Shah Tughluq's reign, the situation was greatly changed. A hundred and fifty years of rule of the Delhi Sultans and increasing familiarity with the Muslims had perhaps wrought the change. During Firuz Shah's reign, a brahman of Delhi attracted large numbers of Muslims, as well as Hindus, to his discourses. Indeed, under his influence a Muslim woman turned Hindu. When complaint was made to Sultan Firuz, the brahman was summoned and commanded to embrace Islam, but he refused to renounce his religion and preferred to be burnt alive.[2]

About 1384, Nawahun, a Hindu *darogha* (a civil officer) of Uch visited Makhdum Jahaniyan, on his death-bed and said, "The bodily being of *Makhdum* is the seal of the saints in the same way as the Prophet Muhammad is the seal of the prophets." Makhdum Jahaniyan and his brother Saiyid Raju Qattal pretended that by saying this he had admitted the truth of Islam, and pressed him to formally embrace it. Nawahun firmly refused to change his religion, and fled for his life to the court of Sultan Firuz. Makhdum Jahaniyan died; but Raju Qattal reached Delhi with witnesses against the *darogha*. Though the Sultan himself did not agree with the logic of Raju Qattal and was supported by one of the Qazis, he felt helpless before the pressure of Raju Qattal and yielded. The brahman was sentenced to death on the charge of apostasy.[3]

During the reign of Sultan Sikandar Lodi, a brahman who was also a poet, imparted instruction on books of Islamic learning and Mulla 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni has produced a verse composed by him;[1] Lodhan, a brahman of Lakhnur (Western U. P.), asserted that Islam was as true a religion as his own and was executed. The governor of Lucknow, Ahmad Khan son of Mubarak Lodi went to the extent of abjuring Islam.[2]

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[1] Al-Biruni, *Kitab al-Hind*, Eng. translation, E.C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India* (London, 1910), I, pp. 19-23.

[2] 'Afif, *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 380-81.

[3] *MRM*, pp. 56-57.

The Regional Kingdoms

The rapid decline of the Delhi Sultanate after the death of Sultan Firuz in 1388, and Timur's invasion ten years later, contributed to the rise of the provincial dynasties in Jaunpur, Malwa and Gujarat; the Deccan and Bengal had already broken away in Muhammad b. Tughluq's time. These eclipsed the glory of Delhi, and all organised their administration on a sound basis. A large number of minor Hindu chiefs, who had not submitted to the Delhi Sultans, were subdued by the new dynasties. Most of them were reduced to the status of petty land owners, paying tribute. These provincial rulers relied upon the support of the local population to maintain peace in their own territories and to make further conquests. This led to extended patronage of local languages and local administrative and military talents, and tended towards greater understanding between all the sections of the population. The provincial rulers took pride in their own achievements, promoted art, architecture and literature, and gave such encouragement to foreign scholars as their resources afforded. Strong provincial sultans gave little countenance to 'ulama who advocated that religiosity in statecraft, which had helped to undermine the strength of the Sultanate of Delhi in the reign of Firuz Shah.

The beginning of the sixteenth century was marked by the revival of the political power of the Rajputs, of whom the most prominent were the Sissodias of Mewar, whose chief Rana Sanga developed his clan into a most formidable force. The discovery of silver and lead mines increased the resources of his state. Rana Sanga revived the glorious traditions of Rajput chivalry and magnanimity. Another important power was that of the Rathors of Marwar, west of Mewar. Its chief Rao Ganga (1515-31) made constant inroads into the territories of Gujarat, and into Ajmer and Nagaur.[1] The occasional Rajput persecution of those towns upset some of the Muslims, but on the whole they adjusted themselves to the new conditions, such as the prohibition against killing cows. Mahdawi literature relates however, an occasion upon which the Rajputs of Jaisalmir resented the cow-sacrifice made by the followers of Saiyid Muhammad of Jaunpur. The Raja of Jaisalmir also raised objection to the killing of cows by the followers of Humayun when they were returning from an expedition against Maldeo of Marwar.[2]

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[1] *MT*, I, p. 323.

[2] *Tabaqat*, I, pp. 322-23, 331.

At the end of 1534, Humayun marched against Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, on reaching Sarangpur he heard that he was besieging Chittor. Bahadur Shah was advised by a group of his followers to raise the siege and engage Humayun. Sadr khan, the most prominent of the Sultan's advisers, argued that they were fighting against *kafirs*. Therefore, were Humayun to proceed against Bahadur Shah, he would be blamed for assisting the *kafirs* against Muslims; and as a pious Muslim ruler he would never dare to incur such disgrace. Bahadur Shah accepted the advice of Sadr Khan and indeed Humayun did not move from Sarangpur until Chittor was conquered[3] on 8 March 1535. Humayun's deference to orthodox Muslim opinion at the cost of military exigencies failed in satisfying the 'ulama and the *sufis*, *Lata'if i-Quddusi*, the *malfuz* (utterances) of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi, seek to denounce Humayun as an enemy of Islam.[4] As the work was compiled after Humayun's flight from India, it tends to give an impression that his pro-Hindu leanings were responsible for his defeat, and that the force of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi's spiritual influence played a major role in it.

Akbar and his Early Religious Policy

Born of a Persian mother on 5 Rajab 949/15 October 1542, in the fort of Rana Virisal of Amarkot in Sind, and brought up in an atmosphere of severe tension caused by hostile uncles, when his father was a refugee in Iran, Akbar educated himself in the Chaghta'i traditions of adventure and enterprise. When Humayun conquered Kabul in November 1545, the child was united with his parents and henceforward shared his father's vicissitudes, undergoing captivity twice again. On 20 November 1547, he was four years, four months and four days old by the *hijri* calendar, and the traditional moment for beginning his formal education had arrived; but he was nowhere to be seen.[1] He defied all Humayun's attempts to make him a scholar; Bairam Khan made several fruitless arrangements to educate him when he was regent to the young Emperor.[2] However, Akbar developed a taste for the *masnawi* of Maulana Jalalu'd Din Rumi, and the *Diwan* of Hafiz;[3] the verses of these two past-masters of eclecticism made a deep impression on his mind, and moulded his thoughts into a matrix of humanitarianism.

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[1] *See* V.S. Bhargava, *Marwar and the Mughal Emperors* (Delhi, 1966), pp. 18-19.

[2] Jauhar, *Tazkiratu'l Waqi'at* (Br. Muesum, Rieu, I, p. 146) f. 49b.

[3] *Tarikh i-Alfi* (British Museum, Rieu, I, f. 117a), ff. 562a-b.

[4] Shaikh Ruknu'd Din, *Lata'if i-Quddusi* (Delhi, 1893-94), pp. 79-81.

From 1551, his father gave him administrative responsibilities in the carrying out of which he exhibited great initiative and promise.[4] In gathering supreme power into his own hands four years after his accession, he willingly played into the hands of the ladies of the harem, but as soon as Bairam Khan was finally despatched towards Mecca in October 1560, he began to assert himself effectively in matters relating to administration and conquest, spurned petticoat government, and judiciously balanced the various pressure groups, one against the other.

When he was hardly twenty years old, he was attracted towards Hindu ascetics, yogis and *sannyasis* and to *qalandars* and sufis. Often he sought the guidance of 'ulama; but it seems that he was already passionately devoted to the search of Reality, and was eager to search for it wherever he thought he might find it.[5]

Early in January 1562, when he was hunting near Madhakur, eight miles west of Agra, the songs of some Indian minstrels about Khwaja Mu'inu'd Din Chishti, the founder of the Chishti *silsilah* in India, threw him into indescribable transports of bliss and filled him with a strong urge to visit the Khwaja's shrine at Ajmer. Accompanied by a few attendants he set off on a pilgrimage to Ajmer on 14 January 1562.[1]

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[1] *AN*, I, pp. 270-71, 316-17.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 30.

[3] *AN*, I, p. 271.

[4] *AN*, I, pp. 312, 315-16, 321-23, 329-30, 335, 346-51, 355-56.

[5] *AN*, I, p. 153; Bev., I, p. 236. He says, "On the completion of my twentieth year, I experienced an internal bitterness, and from the lack of spiritual provision for my last journey, my soul was seized with exceeding sorrow." (Jarrett, III, p. 433).

During this journey, he contracted the everlasting friendship of Raja Bhara Mal Kachwaha of Amber, and many of his dependants. Ajmer assumed singular importance for Akbar for both his political ambitions and as his spiritual interests. Already an important centre of pilgrimage, Ajmer became an important military base from which Akbar could direct military expeditions against disaffected Rajput chiefs without arousing the suspicion of the friendly states. Thus for fifteen years the Emperor paid annual visits to Ajmer, and sometimes went twice or thrice a year, to implore the saint's spirit to bless him with further victories and sons, and to offer thanksgiving for his conquests and the fulfilment of his vows.

The verses of Persian mystics and close contact with Yogis and sufis made him deeply conscious of the sufferings of humanity at large. Early in the seventh year of his reign (March 1562), he abolished the traditional practice of enslavement of the families of those who were killed or taken captive in war. He said:

> "If the husbands have taken the path of insolence, how is it the fault of the wives, and if the fathers have chosen the road of opposition what fault have the children committed? Moreover the wives and innocent children of such factions are not munitions of war."

Abu'l Fazl, summing up the impact of the new ordinance says:

> "As the intentions of the Sha[illegible]shah were entirely right and just, the blissful result ensued, that the wild and rebellious inhabitants of the farthest places in India placed the ring of devotion in the ear of obedience and became the cause of the orderliness of the world."[2]

In August 1563, Akbar was hunting in the neighbourhood of Mathura. A courtier encouraged by his humanitarian leanings brought it to his notice that "for a long time it has been the custom in India for rulers to take sums proportionate to their rank and wealth from the people who came to sacred spots to worship, and call the money *karmi*."[1] Akbar remitted this pilgrim tax, "which amounted to crores." from all parts of his kingdom. He often said:

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[1] *AN*, I, pp. 154-55. Akbar's interest in the Khwaja was aroused by songs about him which he heard recited in Midhakur near Sikri.

[2] *AN*, II, pp. 159-60; Bev., I, pp. 246-47.

> "Although the folly of a sect might be clear, yet, as they had no conviction that they were on the wrong path, to demand money from them, and to put a stumbling block in the way of something they had made a means of approach to the sublime threshold of Unity, and which they considered as the worship of the Creator, was disapproved by the discriminating intellect and was a mark of not doing the will of God."[2]

Akbar took a still more revolutionary step by abolishing *jizyah* in March 1564, amidst loud protests from the important Muslim nobles, who drew his attention to the financial losses that would follow. Abu'l Fazl does not mince matters regarding the motives for imposing of *jizyah*:

> "When this tax was imposed in former times by those who held outward sway, the reason for it was that they on account of heart-rooted enmity, were girded up for the contempt and destruction of opposite factions. For political purposes, and for their own advantage, they fixed a sum of money as a compensation therefore, and gave it the name of *jizyah*. Thus they both gained their object and also derived a profit. At the present day, owing to the blessing of the abundant goodwill and graciousness of the lord of the age, those who belong to other religions have, like those of one mind and one religion, girded the loins of devotion and service. They exert themselves for the advancement of the [Mughal] dominion, so how can those dissenters, whose separation is founded merely on habit, and whose zeal and devotion are real, be classed with that old faction which cherished mortal enmity, and be the subject of contempt and slaughter? Moreover, the prime cause of levying the tax in old times was the poverty of the rulers and their assistants. At this day, when there are thousands of treasures in the store-chambers of the world-wide administration, and when every one of the servants of the threshold of fortune is rich and prosperous, why should a just

[1] *AN*, II, p. 190; Bev., II, pp. 294-95.

[2] *AN*, II, p. 190; Bev., II, p. 295.

> and discriminating mind apply itself to collecting this tax"[1]

Though Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi had not yet been appointed as *sadru's sudur*, Makhdumu'l-Mulk 'Abdu'llah Sultanpuri wielded considerable influence. It is remarkable, that within four years after assuming supreme control over the government, Akbar was able to make such revolutionary administrative changes. Shibli, an eminent Indian Muslim theologian in the early twentieth century, asserted that *jizyah* was not a discriminatory tax, and was levied on non-Muslims because they were not called upon like Muslims to perform military services.[2] It has now become fashionable for an important section of the Muslim scholars of India and Pakistan to justify the imposition of *jizyah* on the lines propounded by Shibli. Thus Professor 'Aziz Ahmad says:

> "Akbar's abolition of *jizyah* was in consonance with his general policy of liberalism and of legal equality of all citizens, but it is quite possible that his decision may have been confirmed by such scholars of Muslim law as Fathu'llah Shirazi and others who must have been familiar with precedents in Islamic history and jurisprudence with cases where *jizyah* had been waived in case of participation of non-Muslim communities in the Muslim state's military or civil services."[3]

Mir Fathu'llah arrived at Akbar's court only in 1582, how then could he have a hand in a legislation enforced in 1564? In fact none of the liberals who in subsequent decades influenced his policies were then at Court. It seems to have been Akbar's independent decision, influenced by the loyalty of the Rajputs, and by political considerations.

The conquest of Gondwana, the suppression of the Afghans of the Eastern Provinces, the conquest of Chittor and Ranthambhor, of Gujarat, Bihar and Bengal; together with revenue, military and other reforms, kept Akbar increasingly busy from 1564 to 1574. During this period the 'ulama entrenched themselves, sometimes presenting the Mahdawis, and sometimes the Shi'is, as a potent danger to the state. Akbar's concessions never satisfied them; their rigid dogmatism angered him, but he could not find, and perhaps did not seriously seek, any way out of the impasse. Most prominent among the 'ulama were Makhdumu'l Mulk 'Abdu'llah Sultanpuri and Sadru's Sudur Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi.

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[1] *AN*, II, pp. 203-4; Bev., II, pp, 316-17.

[2] 'Aziz Ahmad and G.E. Von Grunebaum, *Muslim Self-Statement in India and Pakistan* (Wiesbaden, 1970), pp. 89-94, English translation of the extract from Shibli Nu'mani, *Rasa'il* (Delhi, 1898), pp. 76-86.

[3] *Studies in Islamic Culture*, pp. 80-81.

Makhdumu'l-Mulk

Makhdumu'l-Mulk Mulla 'Abdu'llah belonged to the family of the Ansars; his ancestors had settled at Sultanpur in the Punjab. He had acquired an adequate knowledge of Arabic and *fiqh* and wrote a book called *Ismat i-Anbiya* and a commentary on *Shma'il al-Nabi.*[1] Humayun had given him considerable power, and had awarded him the title of Makhdumu'l Mulk. Sher Shah also consulted him on all important matters, and appointed him the Shaikhu'l-Islam[2] (the principal 'alim of the state). Islam Shah was not convinced of his loyalty to the Afghan dynasty and secretly sneered at him as the fifth son of Babur; but publicly he exhibited respect to him.[3] The oppressive measures that Islam Shah found it essential to adopt against the Mahdawis and the Shi'is had made Makhdumu'l Mulk indispensable to him.

After Humayun's return to Kabul from Iran, Makhdumu'l Mulk re-established contacts with him through merchants. When Humayun approached Lahore, Makhdumu'l Mulk, along with other 'ulama and saints, went outside the walls to welcome him. At that time he and another eminent 'alim, Hajji Mahdi, were quarrelling and the attempts of Humayun to reconcile them' failed. Makhdumu'l Mulk again became the Emperor's favourite.

During the confusion that followed Humayun's death, Sikandar Sur came out of his retreat in the Punjab hills and began to collect revenue from the province. The Mughal governor of Lahore, Hajji Muhammad Khan Sistani, seems to have obtained authentic information about Makhdumu'l-Mulk's concealed wealth. He buried him in the ground up to his navel, and then made him dig up from the earth some of the gold which he had buried.[1] At the end of the second year of Akbar's reign, Makhdumu'l Mulk retrieved his position by persuading a Ghakkar chief named Adam to submit to the Emperor.[2] When Bairam Khan had submitted to Akbar (October 1560) after his half-hearted rebellion, Makhdumu'l Mulk was sent to assure him of the Emperor's favour.[3] In subsequent years, he became a terror to all who did not accord with his orthodox Sunni views.

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[1] An exposition of the person and character of the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad bin 'Isa al-Tirmizi (died c. 892-93), the authors of one of the six canonical traditions also wrote *Shama'il al-Nabi,* which many Persian scholars translated. The most famous translation is by Muhammad Muslihu'd Din Lari (died 1571-72). (Storey, pp. 174-75).

[2] *AN*, II, p. 47. [3] *MT*, I, p. 416.

Sadru's Sudur

Shaikh 'Abdu'n-Nabi was the son of Shaikh Ahmad, and the nephew of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi. In his youth he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and studied *hadis* rather superficially under some *faqihs* (jurists) there. After his return to his native land, he came into sharp conflict with his father and uncles on problems like *Tauhid* and *sama'*. His father wrote a treatise in support of *sama'*; 'Abdu'n Nabi wrote a treatise rejecting his father's views.[4] This controversy brought him into the lime-light. In 1561-62 Akbar appointed him the *sadru's sudur*.

Gradually Akbar came to have great faith in his piety and learning. From time to time, he used to go to the Shaikh's house to listen to his lectures on *hadis*. Once or twice he placed the Shaikh's shoes together to help him to put them on. The Emperor himself often called the *azan* (the signal for summoning to prayers), led the prayers and swept the mosque. Once when he was putting on a robe of saffron colour, the Shaikh strongly reprimanded him in open court and was on the point of hitting him with his stick. When Akbar complained to his mother, the pious lady consoled him with the remark that the incident would go down in history as an example of the infinite regard of a mighty Emperor for the *shari'a*.[5]

Prince Salim when an infant was sent to the Shaikh's house to study *Chihl Hadis* of Maulana 'Abdu'r-Rahman Jami.[6] Later on, Mirza 'Aziz Koka brought it to the notice of Akbar that despite his boastings, Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi always pronounced *hazam* (prudent courses) as *kharam* (a meaningless word) and did not know the right placing of the dots on the letters.[1]

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[1] *AN*, II, p. 47. [2] *MT*, II, pp. 19-20; Lowe, p. 13.
[3] *AN*, II, p. 117. [4] *AA*, p. 222.
[5] *Ma'siru'l Umara*, II, p. 561; *Zakhiratu'l Kahawanin*, pp. 72-73.
[6] Nuru'd Din 'Abdu'r Rahman Jami (1414-92) was essentially a poet and a sufi but the Shawahid al-Nubuwwah (evidences of Muhammad's prophethood) written by him is also very famous. *Chihl Hadis* was some recension of the same work.

In 1575-76, an order was issued that unless the *farmans* of *madad i ma'ash, waqf,* and *adrar* (land grants for religious and charitable purposes) were verified by the signatures of the *sadru's sudur,* the *karoris* (revenue officers under Akbar's new system)[2] were not to honour them. Deserving people, from the extreme east of India to the west, were therefore obliged to come to Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi's court. If any one of them had a powerful supporter in one of the amirs or near friends of the Emperor, he could manage to get his affairs settled; others had to bribe the Shaikh's servants, his door-keepers and even his sweepers. About 100 *bighas* was the total grant that was allowed to a teacher of *Hidayah*[3] or of some other advanced book of theology. Badauni bitterly complains:

> "But to men of no renown, to low fellows, and even to Hindus he granted land for the first time. Thus learning and learned men fell from day to day into lower estimation. Even in the very audience-hall, when after mid-day he sat down on the throne of his pride and performed wazu (ablution performed before prayer) drops of the water that he used, invariably fell on the heads, faces and garments of eminent amirs and courtiers of high rank, and he made no exception."[4]

By the time Abu'l Fazl entered the imperial court in 1575 the domination of Makhdumu'l Mulk and the Sadru's Sudur had assumed threatening proportions. While Akbar, in gratitude for his successful conquests and administrative reforms, devoted more and more attention to meditation and thanksgiving, Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and Makhdumu'l Mulk vied with one another in increasing their personal power and authority. The prosperity of his empire had made Akbar's court a rendezvous for scholars, artists and men of letters from Iran and Central Asia where narrow religious beliefs stifled their proper development. But neither they nor talented Indians, whether Muslims or Hindus, could easily survive because of the suffocating atmosphere which the narrow-minded 'ulama generated. It was in this period of intellectual and religious ferment that the talented sons of Shaikh Mubarak strengthened the foundations of that broadly-based government which Akbar had commenced laying in the sixth year of his reign, and which by 1573-74 was faced with a serious crisis because of the preposterous attitude of the 'ulama in state matters. Even the possibilities of the re-imposition of *jizyah* were being explored. Badauni says:

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 204. [2] *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, pp. 275-82.
[3] A famous theological work on the Hanafi law. [4] *MT*, II, pp. 204-05.

> "During those days (983/1575-76), His Majesty ordered Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and Makhdumu'l Mulk to examine the matter, and to decide the amount of *jizyah* to be levied on Hindus. They issued *farmans* (imperial orders) in all directions; but these orders quickly disappeared, like a reflection on the water."[1]

Indeed the new wave of religious enquiry and the solutions found by the new leadership staved off the crisis. Professor K.A. Nizami throws the historical developments of nearly four centuries into an entirely wrong perspective when he asserts:

> "When everything seemed to be moving in the right direction in an atmosphere of general goodwill and co-operation, his (Akbar's) venture in the religious domain suddenly changed the entire atmosphere. His attempt to work out a synthesis of religion was a task too difficult for rulers or politicians to accomplish. As a matter of fact, had not Akbar interfered in the religious sphere, the religious and cultural forces which were working in India and had given birth to cosmopolitan and syncretic trends as expressed in the Shattari and the Bhakti movements of the period, would have themselves worked out a synthetic religious approach."[2]

This is not the place to comment upon the so-called religious synthesis which Akbar is believed to have tried to work out; the subsequent pages show that he tried to achieve conditions in which all religious beliefs and practices could flourish without any hindrance, either political or religious. The analysis offered in the previous pages has shown that the religious tensions were too deep, and the challenges too serious, to be allowed to work out alone. An unending succession of suffering and hardship would have been more likely than a polite accommodation.

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 210.

[2] K. A. Nizami, Naqshbandi Influence on Mughal Rulers and Politics in *Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth International Congress of Orientalists*, Jan. 4-10, 1964, IV (Poona, 1970), p. 314.

The political ambitions of such leaders of the Shattari movement as Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus had produced jealousy even in the retiring Chishtis, who had much in common with them; other Sunni groups enjoyed their open hostility. The *sants* and other protagonists of the Bhakti movement could not have exerted any significant influence without a peaceful political atmosphere. Even orthodox Sunnis found Makhdumu'l Mulk and Sudru's Sudur's suffocating supremacy intolerable. They had no choice but to accept it; however unhappy, an orthodox revolt against a militantly orthodox religious party was unthinkable.

Akbar's services to India were many; to break this sterile dominion was not the least of them. Among those who gave him the necessary ideological support were the two sons of Shaikh Mubarak; Abu'l Fazl far and away the foremost. No wonder that they were the main target of orthodox fury and objects of pious calumny both in their own lifetime and after their death.

CHAPTER 2

THE MUBARAK FAMILY

The ancestors of Shaikh Mubarak belonged to the Quraish,[1] the tribe of the Prophet Muhammad, and lived in Yemen in the southwest of the Arabian peninsula. For reasons which remain obscure Shaikh Musa, son of 'Abdu'l Qaiyum and grandson of 'Abdu'llah Quraishi emigrated to Sind in the ninth/fifteenth century and settled at Rel, a pleasant town in Siwistan. Abu'l Fazl says that some of his ancestors were devoted to the ascetic life of retirement and seclusion, while others followed the worldly life of administrators or merchants.[2]

Shaikh Musa married at Rel. Although he had come from the desert to an affluent town, he preferred, as some of his ancestors had done, to lead a retired life given up to meditation and ascetic exercises. His son 'Abdu'llah and his grandson Ruknu'd Din scrupulously maintained his traditions, and the family lived in Siwistan until the beginning of the tenth/early sixteenth century when Shaikh Khizr, the son of Shaikh Ruknu'd Din and the father of Shaikh Mubarak, left Sind, with his wife and a few relations to travel. He had planned first to visit the saints of India and later on to proceed to the Hijaz and meet members of his own tribe. But he got no further than Nagaur (Nagor) between Jodhpur and Bikanir, a city made famous by its long connection with Muslim saints and mystics.

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[1] Introducing a poet named Ghubari, son of Haidar the grocer, Badauni says, "He used to call himself a Quraishi until it became generally accepted that anybody who had no descent whatever to boast of claimed connection with the Quraish." (*MT*, III, p. 289; Haig, p. 398). This defamation of the Quraishis is also intended to cast doubt on the claims of Abu'l Fazl's father.

[2] Shaikh Mubarak's letter to Faizi in *Majma'u'l Afkar* (Khuda Bakhsh Library Patna, no. 872.) The letter is available in several general collections of letters. (John Rylands Library Manchester, Persian Ms. 425 f. 280a). It is partly reproduced in Muhammad Husain Azad's *Darbar i-Akbari* (Lucknow, n.d.), pp. 370-71. Abu'l Fazl's autobiography in the *A'in i-Akbari* is based on this letter '*A'in*, III, p. 202; Jarrett, III, p. 479.

On arrival, Shaikh Khizr put up near where Shaikh Hamidu'd Din Suwali Nagauri[1] (d. 673/1274) had lived. This Shaikh, who had been called Sultanu't Tarikin (king of anchorites) by his preceptor Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din Chishti, as we have already mentioned, had given a new dimension to the development of sufism in India. He lived on the produce of a small piece of land which he himself cultivated, and declined all offers of state grants for his subsistence.[2] He was so strongly opposed to the eating of meat that he often declared, that after his death no meat should be distributed in alms for the peace of his soul. It was suggested to him that there should not be any objection to purchasing meat from shops; he observed, "The quantity of meat that you purchase from shops is made good by killing another lamb."[3] His contemporary Qazi Hamidu'd-Din, though a Suhrawardi, was strongly devoted to the Chishti practice of *sama'*. His letters and works, especially *Tawali'al-Shumus* exercised a powerful influence over the Indian sufic way of thinking.[4] In succeeding centuries, many eminent sufis and scholars settled in that remote part of the Delhi Sultanate. Khwaja Husain Nagauri, who was a contemporary of Sultan Ghiyasu'd Din Khalji of Malwa (1469-1501) lived in Nagaur like an ordinary bullock-cart driver of Rajasthan. Any gifts he obtained from Sultan Ghiyasu'd Din he spent in building a tomb on the grave of his ancestor Shaikh Hamidu'd Din Suwali, and on similar constructions.[5] Despite the rise of the Rajput powers of Mewar and Marwar and their occasional incursions,[6] Nagaur was a rendezvous for celebrated saints and ascetics from various parts of India and abroad.

Mir Saiyid Yahya Bukhari of Uch, one of the ancestors of Saiyid Jalalu'd-Din Bukhari Makhdum i-Jahaniyan, who lived in the early sixteenth century at Nagaur, had earned considerable celebrity for his saintly life. Shaikh 'Abdu'r Razzaq Qadiri Husaini of Baghdad had also settled there. Shaikh Yusuf Sindi, another eminent sufi who had performed the pilgrimage to Mecca twenty-seven times, was engaged in imparting instruction and spiritual guidance there. Therefore Shaikh Khizr, carried away by

[1] *AA*, pp. 29-37.
[2] *Sururu's Sudur* (Habibganj Ms. Aligarh Muslim University Library), p. 23.
[3] *Ibid.* [4] *AA*, pp. 37-44. [5] *Ibid*, pp. 182-83.
[6] Nizamu'd Din Ahmad, *Tabaqat i-Akbari* (Calcutta, 1935), II, p. 338.

his regard for this galaxy of saints and scholars, gave up his intended itinerary and settled down there.[1]

In 911/1505-06 a son was born to him near the quarters of Shaikh Munawwar, the father of Shaikh Nizam Nagauri. It is said that several children had been born to Shaikh Khizr, but none had survived. The new arrival was named Mubarak (blessed) in the hope that he might live. He began his studies early; by the age of nine he was showing a considerable understanding of all that he learnt. By the time he was fourteen years old, he had read many works of conventional learning. He studied under many eminent scholars, but the most prominent of them was Shaikh 'Atan[2] who, in the reign of Sultan Sikandar Lodi, had emigrated to India and settled at Nagaur. He is said to have lived one hundred and twenty years.[3] Shaikh Salar Nagauri, who had studied in Iran and Turan, also instructed Shaikh Mubarak in several branches of learning.[4]

The entire burden of his education fell on his mother, for in his infancy his father Shaikh Khizr set off for Siwistan to bring some of his other relations to Nagaur and died on the way. Meanwhile, Nagaur was invaded by famine and disease. Except his mother, all of his relations perished.

The other Shaikhzadas[5] were filled with envy at Mubarak's prodigious achievements and their women-folk insulted his mother. She complained to Shaikh 'Abdu'r-Razzaq Qadiri Husaini Baghdadi, who had held Shaikh Khizr in the highest esteem, and to Shaikh Yusuf Sindi, who had been her husband's close friend. They summoned the Shaikhzadas and asked them for an explanation for their conduct. They said, "The wife of Khizr was our maid-servant and we gave her to him in marriage. Now she has insulted our mothers and sisters, and we have retaliated." Shaikh 'Abdu'r-Razzaq and Shaikh Yusuf Sindi rejected their allegations as maliciously inspired falsehoods and reprimanded them for their malice. Afterwards Shaikh Mubarak and his mother moved to the quarters of Saiyid Yahya, seemingly a safer place.[1]

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 202; Jarrett, III, p. 486.

[2] Muhammad Ghausi Shattari, *Gulzar i-Abrar* (Lindesiana, p. 143, no. 185), f. 142b.

[3] *A'in*, III, p. 202; Jarrett, III, p. 481.

[4] *Gulzar i-Abrar*, f. 146a.

[5] Male members of a sufi's family.

As Mubarak grew older, Nagaur offered less and satisfaction to his developing mind. He earnestly desired to travel and acquire knowledge from saints and scholars of different lands, but his mother would not allow him to leave her. While he was in this predicament, the aged Shaikh Faiyazi Bukhari, one of the disciples of Khwaja 'Ubaidu'llah Ahrar,[2] arrived at Nagaur incognito. He was believed to have reached the age of 120; and to have lived long in parts of Northern China in meditation and ascetic exercises, enjoying the benefits of asceticism in the solitude of the mountains and deserts. Shaikh Mubarak somehow came to know of his arrival; and after persistent search he found him. For four months he absorbed spiritual and intellectual benefits from him; then Shaikh Faiyazi died.[3]

Soon disorders disturbed Nagaur. On 12 May 1531, Rao Ganga of Marwar died and his ambitious son Rao Maldeo began to transform his father's territories of Jodhpur, and Sojat into a powerful Rajput principality, by aggrandizing himself at the cost of Jaisalmir, Mewar, Amber and Gujarat. In about 1535 Maldeo annexed Nagaur to his kingdom.[4] It seems that Shaikh

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[1] Mubarak's letter (Manchester Ms.), f. 280b.

[2] 'Ubaidu'llah Ahrar (1404-91), the celebrated Naqshbandi saint, was an orthodox Sunni and lived in Transoxiana and Khurasan. He was an inveterate enemy of the Shi'is and played a prominent role in subduing the influence of Shiism in Khurasan. Babur was very sincerely devoted to him and his descendants, and took a keen interest in the teaching of 'Ubaidu'llah's disciples.

[3] *A'in*, III, p. 203; Jarrett, III, p. 482.

[4] Abu'l Fazl's sentence is cryptic. He says "Maldeo's adventures caused confusion." Blochmann refers to the event as "Maldeo's disturbance." Jarrett translates, "The affairs of Maldeo caused an interregnum." Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar in his footnote suggests that "Abu'l Fazl must refer to the affair subsequent to the final defeat of Humayun by Sher Shah, near Kanauj, in AH 947 (AD 1540). Humayun fled to Sind, and failing in his attempts there marched by way of Jesalmer to Nagor and Ajmer then ruled by Maldeo the most powerful of Hindu Rajahs. This prince determined to seize him and make him over to Sher Shah. Warned in time Humayun fled at midnight to Amarkot" (Jarrett, III, p. 483). This incident, although very important could not be the main cause of Shaikh Mubarak's departure from Nagaur. If it is accepted as true, Shaikh Mubarak would have been at Ahmadabad only two years, a somewhat inadequate period to attain perfection as he claims to have done. Thus he most likely left Nagaur in 1535, and not in 1540.

Mubarak thereupon emigrated to Ahmadabad. His mother, who had hitherto restrained him from travelling, was by then dead.

At that time a number of eminent scholars, saints and theologians had migrated to Gujarat from different Islamic countries and lived at Ahmadabad. It appears that Mubarak first of all plunged himself into the study of the Maliki,[1] Shafi'i,[2] Hanafi[3] and Hanbali[4] schools of Sunni jurisprudence. He later on studied the Isna 'Ashari[5] Shi'i principles of law. The study of jurisprudence sharpened his intellectual faculties and equipped him to take an independent attitude in theological controversies. He also studied the works of Ibn 'Arabi and his commentator Sadru'd Din Qunawi.

He made a special study of the works of Ibn Sina and the Ishraqi philosophy of Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi Maqtul under Khatib Abu'l Fazl Kazaruni, whom one of the Sultans of Gujarat had invited from Shiraz. The Khatib had first acquired learning under his own father and had later attended the lectures of Maulana Muhyi u'd-Din Ashkbar and Khwaja Hasan, who were the favourite disciples of Saiyid Sharif Jurjani.[6] Above all he was one of the disciples of Jalalu'd Din Dauwani. Khatib Abu'l Fazl took Shaikh Mubarak under his tutelage and adopted him as his son.[7] Ibn Sina's *magnum opus*, *Kitab al-Shifa'*[8] and its summary *al-Isharat wa'l Tanbihat*, the minutiae of the *Tazkira*,[9] and Ptolemy's Almagest, were mastered by Shaikh Mubarak under this distinguished scholar's supervision.

At Ahmadabad, Shaikh Mubarak also came in contact with Shaikh 'Umar of Thatta who lectured on the learning of the Kubrawiya order founded by the celebrated sufi, Shaikh Najmu'd

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[1] See *Supra*, ch. I, fn. 2. [2] See *Supra*, ch. I, fn. 3.

[3] See *Supra*, ch. I, fn. 1. [4] See *Supra*, ch. I, fn. 4.

[5] See *Supra*.

[6] 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Saiyid al Sharif Jurjani (1339-1413), the author of a large number of philosophical works in Arabic and Persian was an outstanding scholar of Timur's court. He and Sa'du'd Din Taftazani were rivals, and both exercised influence upon fifteenth and sixteenth century philosophical thinking.

[7] *A'in*, III, 205, Jarrett, III, p. 484.

[8] The famous philosophical encyclopaedia.

[9] Several works bear this title, the work exactly meant cannot, therefore, be identified.

Din Kubra (1145-1226). The Taifuri order of Shaikh Bayazid Bistami, and its offshoot the Shattari order, founded in India by Shaikh[1] 'Abdu'llah (d. 1485) were also strong in Gujarat; Shaikh Mubarak sat at the feet of the mystics of these orders, and attended also upon Chishti and Suhrawardi saints.[2]

About this time, the Mahdawis were at loggerheads with the traditionists like Shaikh 'Ali Muttaqi and his disciple Shaikh Muhammad b. Tahir of Patan. The great Mahdawi scholar Bandagi Miyan 'Abdu'l Malik Sajawandi (d. 981/1574), a disciple of one of Saiyid Muhammad's successors Shah Dilawar, established his *da'ira* near Ahmadabad on the banks of the Sabarmati. He never hesitated to match his intellectual powers against Shaikh 'Ali Muttaqi and his disciples. Shaikh Mubarak was very friendly with Shaikh 'Abd'ul Malik and referred to him his doubts about the claims of the Mahdawis;[3] yet he must have known of the contributions of Shaikh 'Ali Muttaqi and his preceptor Ibn al-Hajar[4] in *hadis* and polemics. His studies at Ahmadabad thus were many—sided and he developed an objective attitude to contemporary intellectual and religious movements.

Towards the end of his stay when Mubarak was contemplating a life of ascetic renunciation, Shaikh Yusuf, an eminent mystic who paid equal attention to meditation and formal prayers, made a profound impression upon his mind. Shaikh Yusuf, recognizing that he was under great mental strain, dissuaded him from embarking on the life of an ascetic and urged him to travel to Agra. If his difficulties were not resolved there, he should leave for Turan, or Iran; but wherever he might settle, he should engage himself in the diffusion of learning rather than in solitary penance and meditation.[5]

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[1] The spearhead of the Shattari movement in Gujarat was Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus who arrived there after 1540. By initiating Saiyid Wajihu'd Din Gujarati (died 1589-90) to the Shattari order, Muhammad Ghaus implanted the Shattari order permanently in Gujarat, from whence it spread to the Malay archipelago.

[2] *A'in*, III, p. 204; Jarrett, III, p. 485. [3] *MRM*, p. 114.

[4] Ibn Hajar al Haitami (1504-67), the famous Shafi'i scholar whose school at Mecca became a centre of orthodox Sunnism. His *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa fi'l Radd 'ala Ahl al-zaygh* or (*al-rafz*) *wal-zandaqa* is a very famous refutation of Shiism.

[5] *A'in*, III, p. 204; Jarrett, III, p. 485.

Shaikh Mubarak, accordingly, set off for Agra, which he reached on Wednesday 6 Muharram 950/11 April 1543. His first contact was with Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Din Majzub (ecstatic) known as 'Ala'ul Bala'ul, who was frequently consulted by the townsfolk about difficulties in their daily life.[1] This ascetic, returning to consciousness one day from an ecstatic trance, said, "It is the Divine Will that you settle in this auspicious town and give up your wanderings." He then gave Shaikh Mubarak his blessing and prophesied for him a splendid career in Agra.[2] Ghausi Shattari, an intimate acquaintance of Shaikh Mubarak and his sons, says:

> "That wise man of the age and the most perspicacious man of the time, Shaikh Mubarak, used to say that when he arrived from Gujarat at Agra, the capital, he first of all approached Shaikh 'Ala'ul Bala'ul in the hope of obtaining a favourable augury. The Shaikh broke the good news in the following encouraging words: 'Settle in this most auspicious city, for noble sons will soon be bestowed upon your house and immeasurable wisdom and abundant felicity await it, but heart-rending miseries, mortifying intrigues, slander and calumny await you too. But do not take them to heart; all will end well."[3]

Shaikh Mubarak settled in the old Agra of the Lodi dynasty on the left bank of the Jumna near the quarters of Mir Rafi'u'd Din, Safavi, where Babur had founded the Char Bagh gardens. He married into the family of Shaikh Chandan Quraishi, a disciple of Shaikh Sama'u'd Din, the preceptor of Shaikh Jamali.[4] According to her son Abu'l Fazl, she was endowed with sterling virtues, and was earnestly devoted to a truthful and saintly life. Her parents and relations, who enjoyed considerable influence at the court of the Lodis and the Surs, urged Shaikh Mubarak to take up a worldly career; but he would not yield. He devoted himself to his own studies alone, and to imparting higher learning to a limited number of keen and serious scholars.[1]

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[1] *AA*, p. 288. Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq's uncle Shaikh Rizqu'llah Mushtaqi knew him intimately, and frequently consulted him.

[2] *A'in*, III, p. 204; Jarrett III, pp. 485-86.

[3] *Gulzar i-Abrar*, ff. 162a-b.

[4] Hamid bin Fazlu'llah, known as Darwesh Jamali Kanboh Dehlawi, the celebrated author of a biography of saints entitled *Siyaru'l 'Arifin* completed between 1530 and 1536, was a poet, and had travelled over a vast portion

During the rule of the Sur dynasty (1538-55), he lectured on theological subjects on the traditional lines. He endeavoured to enforce the commands and prohibitions of the *shari'a* so strictly that nobody wearing a gold ring, silk garments, red hose or red or yellow garments could enter his lecture room. If some one appeared with trousers descending below the heels, he immediately had them torn so that they ended above the ankles, as prescribed by the *shari'a.* If he heard music while walking through the streets, he would at once flee the place.[2] Sher Shah, Islam Shah and their nobles offered him stipends and *madad i-ma'ash* grants but he rejected their largesse. This enhanced his prestige, but gave rise to considerable animosity among 'ulama, who depended on state patronage for their livelihood.

He provoked no one on purpose; but he never hesitated to express his theological opinions frankly. However, a few scholars who attended his lectures without respecting his integrity, misunderstood him and misinterpreted his views, and intrigued against him.[3]

A crisis was precipitated because of his outspokenness in the debates arranged by Islam Shah to examine the claims of Shaikh 'Ala'i, the celebrated Mahdawi preacher and scholar. Mir Saiyid Rafi'u'd Din Safavi, Mulla Abu'l Fath Thaneswari; Mulla Jalal Bhalim; and several other eminent theologians and scholars were invited. Shaikh 'Ala'i and his select band of followers had antagonised the Sultan and his courtiers by ignoring the court etiquette. In the debate Shaikh 'Ala'i spared none of the court theologians and recklessly condemned the luxurious life of Makhdumu'l Mulk 'Abdu'llah Sultanpuri. Shaikh Mubarak upheld Shaikh 'Ala'i; and gave the title of Saifu'llah (the sword of God) to one Mahmud Khan, a distinguished supporter of the

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of the Islamic world. He met the famous Persian poet Nuru'd Din Jami (1414-92), in Herat shortly before his death. Both Lodis and Mughals held him in high esteem. He had two sons; the elder, Shaikh 'Abdu'r Rahman Gada'i Kamboh was appointed by Bairam Khan as Akbar's *sadr*; see Chapter I, note 191.

[1] *A'in*, III, p. 204; Jarrett, III, p. 486. According to Khwaja Kalan, the elder son of Khwaja Baqi Bi'llah, her name was Ladu. [*Mublighu'r Rijal* (Delhi Persian Ms. 112, I.O. library), p. 104a].

[2] *MT*, III, p. 73.

[3] *A'in*, III, p. 205; Jarrett, III, p. 487.

Mahdawi leader.[1]

Like many other contemporary scholars of distinction such as Shaikh Dawud,[2] Shaikh Jamalu'd Din and Shaikh Ḥatim Sanbhali, Shaikh Mubarak frankly admitted the eminence and scholarship of Saiyid Muhammad of Jaunpur, the founder of the Mahdawi movement.[3] He composed *Maza Mahdi* (Mahdi has departed) as the chronogram of Saiyid Muhammad's death. In 956/1557-58, Shaikh Hatim Sanbhali was informed by the young Mulla 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni that his preceptor Shaikh Mubarak had recognized Saiyid Muhammad of Jaunpur as an eminent saint, but not as the Mahdi. Shaikh Hatim's disciple Mir Saiyid Muhammad Mir 'Adl, who was present, pressed Badauni to explain why people called Shaikh Mubarak the Mahadawi, Badauni said, "Because he tries to enforce the command to do what is lawful and to refrain from all that is unlawful." Mir Saiyid Muhammad Mir 'Adl said, "Mir 'Abdu'l Haiy of Khurasan, who had held the post of *sadr* for some time, one day spoke ill of Shaikh (Mubarak) to the Khan i-Khanan (Bairam Khan). Do you know why?" Badauni said, "The Shaikh had written him a note giving him counsel on various matters, and among other things had advised him to attend prayers in the mosque with the assembled congregation in pursuance to the laws of the *shari'a*. The Mir attributed this advice of the Shaikh to his being a Mahdawi and thought that he himself was being reproached with being a Rafizi (Shi'i). Mir Saiyid Muhammad 'Adl said, "This deduction of the Mir reminds one of the syllogism, 'You don't join in the congregation prayers, everybody who does not join in the congregational prayers is a Rafizi; therefore you are a Rafizi. But such deduction (in Logic) is inadmissible. And likewise the syllogism 'The Shaikh enforces the command to do what is lawful; anybody who enforces the command to do what is lawful is a

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[1] *MRM*, p. 127.

[2] Shaikh Dawud of Chati (Lahore) was one of the most renowned saints of his time. Badauni has given a long biographical account of him in his *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh*, saying that each day fifty to one hundred Hindus paid respect to him and were converted to Islam. He had a big following; his disciples repeated O Wadud, O Wadud ('O God!), but some accused them of repeating O Dawud. *MT*, III, p. 46.

[3] *MRM*, p. 95.

Mahdawi; therefore the Shaikh is also a Mahdawi.' This argument is also unsound."[1]

In fact, anyone who ventured to disagree with Makhduma'l Mulk and his supporters was put to trouble and inconvenience. Shaikh Budh of Bihar, one of the most distinguished and venerated scholars of the day, to whom Islam Shah had referred the case of Shaikh 'Ala'i, felt unable to express his honest opinion because of the influence that Makhdumu'l Mulk wielded at the royal court. Shaikh Budh first wrote to Islam Shah, "Seeing that the Mahdawi question is not indissolubly linked up with the faith of Islam, and that very great difference of opinion exists about the signs by which the Mahdi is to be distinguished, it is impossible to convict Shaikh 'Ala'i of infidelity or impiety." The sons of Shaikh Budh, fearful of the consequences of this letter, prevailed upon their father to withdraw it. Consequently the Sultan was informed that Makhdumu'l Mulk was an indisputable authority on Islamic law and the action should be taken according to his judgment.[2]

Shaikh Mubarak's sympathy with Shaikh 'Ala'i and his search for knowledge were misinterpreted by the Mahdawis too. They took him to be a sincere Mahdawi.[3] Indeed, in those days, Shaikh Mubarak's fearless advocacy of the cause of truth was inconceivable to men of inferior stamp; and he had to pay dearly for his honesty for the rest of his life.

In 954/1547-48 Mir Rafi'u'd Din Safavi died. He had been shrewd enough to avoid the hostility of the dominant section of the Court 'Ulama; yet in him Shaikh Mubarak had a sympathetic supporter. After his death, the Shaikh gave himself up exclusively to prayer and teaching.[4]

On 23 July 1555, Humayun re-established his authority over Delhi. Some of the scholars and intellectuals who had accompanied him from Iran and Turan to India found their way to Shaikh Mubarak's lectures at Agra. Probably, one of his distinguished pupils among the new emigrants was Ghiyasu'd Din, who was subsequently given the title of Naqib Khan by Akbar and excelled his contemporaries in the knowledge of biography and history. He was the grandson of the celebrated historian Mir Yahya and the son of Akbar's tutor Mir 'Abdu'l Latif Qazwini.

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[1] *MT*, III, pp. 67-68; Haig, III, pp. 110-11.

[2] *MRM*, pp. 128-29.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 91, 95; *'Aqa'id i-Shaikh Mubarak* (Asafiya Hyderabad Ms.) f. 49.

[4] *A'in*, III, p. 204; *AA*, pp. 251-53.

Humayun's premature death on 24 January 1556 and Hemu's bid for power seriously undermined the peace at Agra and Delhi. The upheaval was a signal for the fall of all whom Hemu deemed unfriendly. However Shaikh Mubarak remained firmly in retirement, although Hemu sought his co-operation. Through his intercession, some innocent persons were saved from persecution. The defeat of Hemu at the battle of Panipat on 5 November 1556, and the restoration of Mughal rule in India was followed by a severe famine. The military raids of the various Afghan factions after the death of Islam Shah, and the devastation caused by the Mughal and Afghan armies were mainly responsible for this miserable situation. In the first year, men were driven to cannibalism; groups of people carried away solitary travellers, to devour their flesh. Abu'l Fazl, who was then five years old, vividly recollected the tragic scenes of those days.[1] Of all the men who lived near his father's house about seventy survived; the rest perished. The members of Shaikh Mubarak's family outlived the calamity mainly because of his patience and forbearance. Sometimes a little grain would be obtained; which was boiled in earthenware vessels, the family then consumed the broth. The common people attributed the family's survival to magic.[2]

It was about 965/1557-58 that a *fatwa* culled from the *Fatawa i-Ibrahim Shahi* was circulated to the *muftis* for their attestation. The *fatwa* said that it was lawful for parents to sell their children in times of distress. A number of eminent *muftis* had subscribed to this opinion, including Shaikh Baha'u'd Din, who was highly respected for his learning; but Shaikh Mubarak refused to agree with them. He despatched his pupil, the young 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni, to Shaikh Hatim Sanbhali who had come to Agra on a temporary visit. Shaikh Hatim analysed the case, corroborated the stand taken by Shaikh Mubarak, and asked Badauni to go to Shaikh Baha'u'd Din, to explain that he supported Mubarak, and request him to reconsider his opinion. When Badauni submitted the opinion of Shaikh Hatim, Baha'u'd Din readily acknowledged his mistake and observed, "As other *muftis* had put their seals to the decision, I relied upon their judgment, and did not examine it carefully. I was certainly negligent." This was a feather in Shaikh Mubarak's cap. Having extolled Shaikh Hatim's knowledge of *fiqh*, he said to Badauni, "Convey my greetings to Shaikh Hatim and say that I did not affix my seal to the application for a decision because I expected that this occasion would arise."[1]

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[1] *Ibid*, III, pp. 205-06; Jarrett, III, pp. 489-90.

[2] An opinion on a point of Islamic law is called a *fatwa* and the person who gives it (who must be qualified) is a *mufti*.

Gradually the famine and the epidemic that followed it subsided and normal life was restored. Shaikh Mubarak resumed his lectures and the presence of notable foreign scholars cast new lustre on them. Along with theology, it seems that he took the plunge into the teaching of the philosophical thoughts of Ibn Sina, and the Ishraqi wisdom. Besides his disciples, the focus of Mubarak's attention now included his two sons, the elder of whom had long since started his studies and was making rapid headway under his anxious supervision.

Faizi

Shaikh Abu'l Faiz, the eldest son of Shaikh Mubarak, who adopted Faizi and, just before he died, Faiyazi as his *takhallus* (nom de plume) was born in 954/1547-48. He commenced his education in an environment of rare scholarly distinction and in a short space of time made considerable progress in different branches of learning. The discussions in his father's seminary sharpened his intellect.[2] At about eleven, Faizi had already learnt Ibn Sina's *Kitab al-Shifa*, and acquired the knowledge of medicine. Although he gave free medical advice to the needy, his genius was best suited to poetry. He specialized in the art of poetry, in the composition of enigmas; in prosody, and the composition of elegant prose; in historiography, philosophy, and medical writings.[51] He was not interested in the study of *fiqh*, regarding it as a branch of knowledge that suited the crafty and fraudulent. He dismissed controversies over obligatory Islamic duties as "a subject fit for corpse-washers." Likewise he looked upon theological debates with contempt.

[1] *MT*, III, pp. 69-70; Haig, pp. 112-13.

[2] *A'in*, III, p. 219; *Gulzar i-Abrar* of 290a; *AN*, II, pp. 308-09.

[3] *MT*, III, p. 299; Haig, pp. 411-12.

Khwaja Husain of Marw,[1] a descendant of Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Daula Simnani, who had been highly favoured by Humayun and enjoyed considerable prestige in Akbar's reign, taught him the art of versification and Faizi wrote a chronogram commemorating the Khwaja's departure for Kabul in 1571-72.[2] Faizi's associations with Qasim Khahi of Kabul[3] and Ghazali Mashhadi,[4] both free from narrow-mindedness, left an indelible mark on his mind.

By the time Faizi reached twenty, he had already made his mark as a poet. Abu'l Fazl says:

> "This new fruit of the garden of knowledge (Faizi) had continually been gathering wisdom by attendance on the conductor of the heavenly caravans, the garland-twiner of the art gallery of Plurality in Unity—his honoured father—and in a short time had attained high rank in his truth-teaching school, which was the meeting of the two seas of *nazar* and *ishraq* (illumination) and the rendezvous of the comprehenders of "theory" and "practice" (relating to Philosophy and Mysticism). One of the results of this association was that his tongue was loosened to perform the magic with which expert poets are endowed. The renown of his achievements captivated the outer world in the same manner as the inner one was enchanted."[5]

Although Shaikh Mubarak and his sons led a quiet life of solitude and retirement, a sizable section of the nobility was highly impressed by their personality. On 6 May 1567, when Akbar marched towards Jaunpur to suppress the rebellion of Khan i-Zaman 'Ali Quli Khan and his associates, he had appointed Mun'im Khan, Khan i-Khanan, to be in charge of Agra. After some time the capital was convulsed by all sorts of unsettling rumours. In his predicament, Mun'im Khan, approached Shaikh Mubarak hoping to hear some encouraging words from him. Shaikh Mubarak comforted him and after night's meditation prophesied the complete annihilation of the

[1] *AN*, II, pp. 305-07; Bev., II, pp. 447-51.
[2] *MT*, III, pp. 176-79; Haig, pp. 248-50.
[3] *MT*, III, pp. 173-74; Haig, pp. 242-44.
[4] *MT*, III, pp. 170-72; Haig, pp. 239-42.
[5] *AN*, II, p. 304; Bev., II, p. 444.

rebels. The success of Akbar's expedition enhanced the powerful Khan i-Khanan's respect for Shaikh Mubarak.[1] Akbar also came to know about the fame of Faizi as a poet.

In about September 1567, when the Emperor was planning to besiege Chitor, he summoned Faizi from Agra to the Imperial Camp. The family's enemies construed the summons to mean that the intrigues of the 'ulama had succeeded. On the evening of 20 Rabi'I, 975/24 September 1567, when Faizi had gone out for a stroll, orders reached Agra that he be conducted to the camp forthwith; the governor sent a squadron of Turks to fetch him, who surrounded Mubarak's house. Warned in advance by Mubarak's enemies that the Shaikh would hide his son and strive to evade compliance with the imperial order, their suspicions were strengthened by Faizi's absence; they were about to commit some sort of outrage, when Faizi appeared. The summons was delivered. Provisions for the journey were supplied by friends and pupils; and the next morning Faizi set off for the Imperial camp. The family waited in great suspense for the outcome of his visit; his old father, himself deeply anxious about the welfare of his son, had to perform the unhappy duty of consoling them. After some days the news of his warm reception at Court was received and the family's anxiety turned to joy.

Faizi presented a *qasida* (ode) to the Emperor, which won the admiration of all the eminent scholars of the age. Abu'l Fazl proudly reproduced it in the *Akbar Nama,* Faizi made additions to it from time to time, and embodied into it an account of the birth of Akbar's sons, including Daniyal born on 9 September 1572. It is a masterpiece of his poetic genius and adequately reflects his highly-strung temperament and the frankness that he had inherited from his father, for instance:

> "Sometimes I was disturbed by anxiety, thinking by what argument I could raise doubts and misgivings about the intellectual disciplines that were taken for granted,
> Wherefore diversity of practices in Islam?
> Wherefore allegories in the words of the Qur'an,
> The lips opened before the tribunal of conceit and hypocrisy, and
> The lies told to support high claims of faith.

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[1] *AN*, II, p. 296.

If such be the truth of Islam in this world, *Kufr* can have a thousand smiles at Islam."[1]

Abu'l Fazl

Abu'l Fazl, the second son of Shaikh Mubarak, was born at Agra on the evening of Sunday 6 Muharram 958/14 January 1551. He was endowed by nature with intellectual gifts of the highest order and a memory singularly retentive and accurate. When only one year old he began to talk clearly. His education began with Arabic; when he was five years old he was able to read and write it. The unique intellectual atmosphere of his father's house had enabled him to amass an unusual stock of general information. By the age of seven, he seems to have committed to memory much of the conventional learning that he acquired from his father at or heard at the discussions in his seminary; but he took little interest in the regular courses of instruction. Not surprisingly, he could not yet understand their significance or depth. His father made several experiments with him. He made the boy memorise brief digests, which he compiled for him out of several works. This increased his store of knowledge, but did not satisfy his curiosity. He felt quite unable to express his doubts and ask his questions; the authority of the learned men of the past overwhelmed him. In his misery he used to creep into quiet corners and weep.

But then he made a friend. He does not tell us his name, nor can we learn it from anyone else. To sit by his friend in his father's classes was his greatest pleasure; his mind, stimulated by attachment and perhaps by determination to repay his friend's love by supreme mental effort, bent itself again to the digests and epitomes. In a short time Abu'l Fazl was once again deep in study; his doubts vanished, his melancholy disappeared, his confidence in himself returned. He was only ten years old; he was to study unremittingly for ten years more.

Sometimes two or three days would pass in studies before he would eat. People were astonished at his devotion to learning but his answer to them was very simple. "My withdrawal is now a matter of habit." "A sick man" he would say, "often recoils from food; why should people be surprised if one ignores food while building up one's powers of spirit and intellect?"

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[1] *AN*, II, p. 305.

A number of current branches of learning were mastered by him simply through listening and discussion. He gave new interpretations to many of the old problems of learning and examined critically all the works he studied; he did not accept a work merely because others did, but sought to form an independent judgment based upon his own reading. Most other scholars deprecated his opinions, and alluded to his youth and inexperience; as he grew into manhood he sublimated his resentment of their sneers into a resolve to excel them all.[1]

It seems that some of his companions used to take notes of his comments upon various works. One of the works through which his remarks became widely known was *al-Mutawwal,*[2] a celebrated work on rhetoric composed by Sad'u'd Din b. 'Umar al-Taftazani (1322-89) an authority on grammar, logic, metaphysics and theology. When a recently discovered gloss upon the work, by Khwaja Abu'l Qasim reached Agra, it was found to corroborate Abu'l Fazl's criticisms. Scholars were amazed; his opponents, silent.

Early in his career as a student, a copy of the gloss on Isfahani was brought to him but half of it had been consumed by white ants. Abu'l Fazl replaced eaten parts with blank paper. Each morning he would sit down and think over the missing portions deeply; gradually and painfully he drafted a supplement to replace the blanks. In the meanwhile a complete copy was found. When both were compared, very few differences from the original were found in Abu'l Fazl's supplement; and even then the style and spirit of the gloss had been preserved. These remarkable proofs of the brilliance of his imagination and his critical acumen established incontestably his eminence as a scholar.

By the time he turned fifteen, he had acquired a deep understanding of the philosophy of the *ishraqis*, the thoughts of the sufis and the subtleties of the Greek philosophers whose works were translated into Arabic, and of commentaries on them; as well as of the works of scholars like Ibn Sina. His intellectual precocity now made him egotistical and conceited.

He had taken to teaching while he studied, first as a helper of his father, and then independently. In September 1567 Faizi had been introduced at Akbar's court but remained in the background there. Abu'l Fazl and his father did not abandon their retired and scholarly lives. However, neither further studies nor his fame as a teacher gave much mental satisfaction to Abu'l Fazl. During the day he would devote himself to teaching, by night he used to leave his house and seek spiritual satisfaction with ascetics; but all in vain.

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 216.

[2] *Al-Mutawwal*, or *al-Sharh al-Mutawwal* or *Sharh al-Talkhis al-Mutawwal* is a work on rhetoric completed by the author in 1347 at Herat.

At the age of twenty (978/1570-71) he was again in doubt, confusion and anguish. He says:

> "I was kept in the defiles of astonished perturbation by the contrary views of the superficially learned, and by the imitative formalists who were then in vogue. I had neither the power to be silent nor the strength to cry out. Though the exhortations of my honoured father kept me from the desert of madness, yet no helpful remedy reached the troubled spot of my soul. Sometimes my heart was drawn towards the sages of the country of Cathay (Khitta i-Khata), sometimes it felt inclined towards ascetics of Mount Lebanon (the Druses); sometimes a desire for conversation with the Lamas of Tibet broke my peace, and sometimes a yearning to pass time with the padres of Portugal pulled at my skirts. Sometimes the wish to confer with the *mu'bids* of Iran, and sometimes a thirst for knowledge of the secrets of the *Zendavesta* robbed me of repose, for my soul was alienated from the society of the people of *sahw* (sobriety) and *sukr* (drunkenness) in my own land."[1]

Shaikh Mubarak and the Shi'is

In the early years of Akbar's reign, Shaikh Mubarak had earned further hostility in the circle of Court 'ulama by supporting the cause of a Saiyid from Iraq who acted as Imam.[2] The Court 'ulama had submitted to the Emperor, on the basis of some old Hanafi law books that the testimony of 'Iraqi *Ashraf* (dignitaries) could not be accepted; how therefore could one be allowed to lead the prayers? The prospects for the Saiyid continuing his post of Imam seemed gloomy. He was friendly with Shaikh Mubarak, who encouraged him to defend himself fearlessly and advised him to argue that the Court 'ulama did not understand the implications of the traditions correctly. What had been quoted from the Hanafi works referred not to Iranian but to Arabian Iraq. Sahikh Mubarak provided him with extracts from the leading authorities on the subject. He urged further that they had not made distinction between the *ashraf i-ashraf* (dignitaries *par excellence*) and the *ashraf* (dignitaries or nobles). He added that punishments were graded according to four categories:

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 84; Bev., III, p. 117.

[2] Literally leader, pattern, model, or prototype; but technically the person who conducts congregational prayers in the mosque, also a ruler.

> "The first is the *ashraf i-ashraf*, consisting of philosophers' *'ulama*, Saiyids, and holy men. The second is the *ashraf* comprising the *amirs* (nobles), *kashawarzan* (husbandmen) and similar people. The third is *awsat* (intermediate) comprising artisans and the merchants. The fourth is *adna* (inferior) and it is composed of all those who do not reach the status of the other groups, for example men of low class, and the anonymous rabble. Each of these orders is subject to a separate code regulating their rewards and punishments. And, indeed, to award every malefactor the same punishment, would be a deviation from the high road of justice."

The Saiyid submitted the defence prepared by Shaikh Mubarak to the Emperor. When the source of his reply became known to the Court 'ulama, they were inflamed with rage. On several other occasions too, the Shaikh had openly opposed attempts at persecution by applying the letter of the law. The Court 'ulama and their supporters now began to accuse him of holding the Shi'i faith; but they found themselves helpless before his encyclopaedic knowledge.[1]

Persecution of Shaikh Mubarak and His Sons

In 1569-70, the impolitic behaviour of Abu'l Fazl precipitated a crisis. One day he and his father went to visit some holy person. It seems that either Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi or Makhdumu'l Mulk had gone there too and was discoursing upon some religious matter. Abu'l Fazl, to the great astonishment of the audience, controverted this Court 'alim so boldly that he was inflamed with rage, and determined to revenge himself upon

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[1] *A'in*, III, pp. 206-07; Jarrett, III, pp. 492-93.

Shaikh Mubarak and his sons. He began to mobilise the support of the nobles and a plot was soon hatched.

One of the favourite students of Shaikh Mubarak was very friendly with the Court 'ulama. They made him their tool. At the dead of night he entered Faizi's chamber, and showing a state of nervousness delivered this prepared speech:

> "The principal men of the day have long been hostile, faithless, and shamelessly ungrateful [to your father]. They have now found an opportunity and are determined upon persecution. Many of those turbaned divines are witnesses; and some of them are complainants. They have gathered plausible pretexts to justify the allegations. Everyone knows the influence these men command at Court, how many eminent men they have had put out of the way to advance themselves; and the high hand with which they have persecuted (innocent men). I have a friend in their secret counsels. This very night he has informed me all about the affair. I have come to you at once, because I fear that when day breaks it may be too late to mend matters. Now my advice is, that you convey the Shaikh secretly into concealment, and let him live in seclusion for a few days until his friends can assemble and he can represent his case fully to His Majesty."

Faizi, who had considerable experience of the intrigues of the 'ulama at Court, was thrown into consternation; he awakened his father and suggested instant flight. Shaikh Mubarak said:

> "Though my enemies may be powerful, the Almighty is vigilant and a just monarch now rules over the world. Wise men from all over the world are assembled here. Even if the intoxication of jealousy has made a handful of godless and unprincipled men restless, truth will finally prevail, for the door of investigation is not closed. Moreover, if God has not decreed my destruction, they can avail nothing, though all unite against me; they can neither do me evil, nor inflict harm upon me. But if it be the will of the Creator, I will cheerfully and gladly give my life and abandon possession of this fleeting existence."

Unimpressed, Faizi swaggeringly flourished his dagger, saying: "Practical business is one thing and the subtleties of *tasawwuf* are another; if you don't go I will at once kill myself and the rest will be up to you. I am not going to sit here and await ruin." The old father surrendered; Abu'l Fazl was awakened; and the three men quietly left their home. The sons could not agree on a safe place of retreat; their father was silent.

They went on Faizi's insistence to the house of a friend of his, but they were coldly received. Abu'l Fazl said: "Things have not yet got out of hand; let us return home; I shall be the spokesman, and perhaps the mantle of these worldly men's authority will be removed, and despondency changed into success." Shaikh Mubarak agreed; but not Faizi. Leaving their reluctant host, they set off for another house where the master, says Abu'l Fazl, received them well, being willing to shelter them, although afraid of the consequences.[1]

Next day, the 'ulama submitted to the Emperor their allegations against Shaikh Mubarak. According to Badauni, Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, Makhdumu'l Mulk and the entire body of 'ulama unanimously presented this petition:

"Shaikh Mubarak Mahdawi is one of those who indulges in *bid'at* (innovation in matters of religion—meaning that he was a Shi'i). Damned himself, he leads others to damnation."[2]

Akbar ordered:

> "Not even temporal matters of the state are transacted without consulting you ('ulama); but this matter belongs exclusively to the province of religion and faith, and so the decision lies entirely in your hands. Summon them before the judicial tribunal, and act in accordance with the laws of the illustrious *shari'a,* and the decisions of the eminent authorities of the day."

The 'ulama sent the imperial *chawush* (sergeants at arms) to summon the Shaikh. When they found him gone, they came to the conclusion that the allegations against him were true and they arrested his fourth son, Abu'l Khair, then only ten years old; meanwhile, a mob invaded Shaikh Mubarak's mosque and damaged the pulpit. The Shaikh was declared an absconder, and his absence was represented as an admission of guilt. Akbar, however, did not accept this: "Why is all this hostility shown against a retired *darwesh* and a learned ascetic?" he asked, "What is the object of this senseless clamour? The Shaikh is in the habit of going on short sojourns and may have gone away for rest and recreation. Why have you brought this child here? and why put a guard on the house?" Abu'l Khair was released; and the guards were taken away.

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[1] *A'in,* III, pp. 208-09; Jarrett, III, pp. 494-96.

[2] *MT,* II, pp. 198-99; Lowe, II, p. 201.

But the enemies of Shaikh Mubarak now began to circulate rumours that the Emperor viewed the Shaikh with disfavour; and set out to create alarm and confusion among his sympathisers. They even tried to murder Shaikh Mubarak and his two elder sons; their host began to fear for his own safety, which decided them to leave the city. A nobleman who had an assignment of land in the neighbourhood took them in, but ten days later, much to his alarm, this noble was summoned to Court. Thereupon the Shaikh retired by night with his sons to the house of another friend. Unfortunately, his neighbour was one of their enemies. So the next night, they stole out while their hosts were asleep; but, finding no place of refuge, came back. They were unwelcome guests and their host wanted them to leave. A few days later, when they showed no sign of going, he removed himself and his household. The three men were obliged to leave the empty house, and in despair they departed for the city on foot and with no idea where they were going. After some miles, they reached a lonely garden, where the gardener made them welcome. Later, the owner of the garden took them to a safer place, where they stayed under his protection for a month, sending letters to their friends, imploring them to intercede for them.

Faizi went to the royal Camp at Sikri to stimulate the support of their friends. One of the important grandees of the Court, strongly moved by the sufferings of Shaikh Mubarak and his sons bluntly told the Emperor:

> "Has the world come to an end? Is the day of resurrection at hand? In this Court malicious lunatics live in comfort, and good men are in distress. What sort of justice is this? What ingratitude!"

When the Emperor asked what he meant; the amir mentioned the sufferings of Shaikh Mubarak. Akbar said:

> "All the eminent persons of the day seem determined to persecute him and do him to death. They prepare *fatwas;* they allow no one to live in peace. Although I know that the Shaikh is in such and such a place (mentioning their retreat), I had ignored it. . . . Let someone go tomorrow morning to summon the Shaikh to the Court, and an assembly of 'ulama shall be held."

When Faizi learned of the royal decision, he rushed to his father in alarm. Though it was clear that they were not without support, he feared that in a debate with the 'ulama the chances of their success were bleak. Rather than risk this, they left their place of concealment without even taking leave of their host. After wandering around in the vicinity of Agra in a fruitless search for a safe hiding-place, they came back to the town and stayed for two months with an elderly noble of humble means.

Finally, Shaikh Mubarak's friends and well-wishers prevailed upon the Court 'ulama to moderate their hostility and induced the Emperor to take them under his wing. So Shaikh Mubarak and Faizi appeared before the Court at last, and returned to their family after several months of sore hardship.[1]

Abu'l Fazl mentions neither friends' nor enemies' names in his long and tedious account of this episode, which has been given at length to show the nature of the intrigues and the influence of the Court 'ulama and the powerlessness of any nobles who did not see eye to eye with them. Badauni tells us that Shaikh Mubarak first asked Shaikh Salim Chishti of Sikri, then at the height of his glory, to intercede for him. Shaikh Salim sent him some money and advised him to leave the imperial territory and retire to Gujarat. Shaikh Mubarak thereupon applied to Mirza 'Aziz Koka, who in the Emperor's hearing praised the Shaikh's learning, asceticism and the superior talents of his two sons, adding that the Shaikh had resigned himself to the will of the Almighty and had never received an *in'am* land (freehold granted to the scholars etc.), and that he himself really could not see why the Shaikh was so much persecuted.[2] From this it seems that the noble who boldly represented the innocence of Shaikh Mubarak was none other than Mirza 'Aziz Koka.

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[1] *A'in*, III, pp. 210-14; Jarrett, III, pp. 496-510.

[2] *MT*, II, pp. 201-02; Lowe, II, pp. 203-04.

The apprehensions of Shaikh Mubarak and his sons were not baseless. If it could have been proved even on the basis of oral evidence that they were either Shi'is or Mahdawis, there would have been no difficulty in having them sentenced to death. Shi'is were being executed regularly. On 13 July 1570, one Mir Habsh was put to death in the bazaars of Agra for holding Shi'i beliefs.[1]

To avoid further provoking the 'ulama, the Shaikh decided to leave Agra with Abu'l Fazl and some other disciples, and pass some time in Delhi. Ever since he first came to Agra, he had been so deeply preocoupied with his seminary that he had not found time to visit other places. He told Abu'l Fazl that early one morning, when half asleep, he had seen Khwaja Qutbu'd Din Ushi and Nizamu'd Din Auliya in the midst of a large throng of eminent saints. He imagined that it was essential that he proceed to Delhi, to propitiate their spirits. He had always strongly opposed the music and dancing of the sufis and strictly enforced the puritanical way of life sanctioned by the *shari'a*, but his visit to the tombs of the Chishti saints of Delhi entirely altered his attitude towards *sama'*. He began to take an interest in music;[2] Badauni, without giving the background of the change, says: "At the end of his life, overpowered with a holy zeal, he came to so much devoted to singing, that he was scarcely for a moment at ease without listening to the chanting of hymns and melodies of the sound of musical instruments.[3] He seems to have acquired a very high proficiency in the art.[4]

After his return to Agra, he resumed his teaching; but his interest in music astounded the 'ulama who had been denouncing him as a Mahdawi. Abu'l Fazl too, seems to have modified his attitude. He also began to visit the Court 'ulama such as Makhdumu'l Mulk, who however seems to have never forgiven him. Early in 1573 when Badauni called upon Makhdumu'l Mulk for the first time and provoked him by his courageous defence of *Rauratu'l Ahbab*, Shaikh Abu'l Fazl was also with him. He quietly pressed Badauni's hand and warned him to be silent.

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[1] *Ibid*, 198-99, 255, *Ibid*, p. 201, 262. Shikh Mubarak's letter to Faizi.

[2] *A'in*, III, pp. 214-15.

[3] *MT*, III, p. 73; Haig, p. 118.

[4] *MT*, II, p. 265.

When they had safely left Makhdumu'l Mulk's house, he congratulated Badauni for having passed through the crisis unscathed.[1]

On Wednesday 3 June 1573, Akbar returned to Sikri after his conquest of Gujarat, and all the important dignitaries of the town including 'ulama and saints, went to congratulate him. To join in the loyal demonstration Shaikh Mubarak made his first appearance at Court. When presented, he said:

> "Although the general public are presenting their felicitations to the lord of the world, yet upon my faithful heart these words are being flashed from the unseen realms: 'Let that Lord of the Universe congratulate all those who are sincerely devoted to him, for God, the bestower of the World, has bestowed upon them, on account of the abundance of their right thoughts and right actions, such a great boon and blessing in the holy personality of His Majesty, who because of his nobility and his excellent administration of the outer world, has become the Primate *peshwa* of the spiritual kingdom. For this reason, such gracious victories have been unveiled."

According to Abu'l Fazl this unique style of congratulation pleased the Emperor, and the Shaikh was dismissed with reverence. The Emperor, frequently recalled this subtle point to mind and mentioned to his courtiers.[2]

Smith gives us to understand that Akbar bore it in mind and acted on it six years later in 1579.[3] Another modern authority says, "The suggestion was too tempting to be forgotten and, as will be narrated in its proper place, Akbar acted upon it six years later."[4] The question of temptation hardly arises. What Shaikh Mubarak was seeking to suggest was that Akbar should try to reorient his policy upon the administration of religious affairs. Abu'l Fazl, in his account of his family's persecution, says:

> "Whenever a monarch, because of his good intentions, leaves the direction of affairs of religion, education, and justice

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[1] *MT*, III, pp. 70-71; Haig, pp. 114-15.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 39, Bev, III, pp. 55-56.

[3] V.A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul* (Oxford, 1917), p. 116.

[4] A. L. Srivastava, *Akbar the Great* , I (Agra, 1962), p. 144.

> entirely to a body who are outwardly virtuous, and himself assumes the mantle of indifference towards them, the influence of the truthful and righteous wanes, the crooked men of learning who follow the faith of the demons, and the grandees of the state unite in intrigue, and give full sway to bigotry. And so families are ruined, and the honour of the people perishes."[1]

In fact Shaikh Mubarak's address must have strengthened Akbar's sense of duty towards all sections of his vast empire and prompted him to recognize that the policy dictated by the 'ulama was too antiquated to fit his ambitions. Neither Akbar nor those responsible for framing state policy knew a way out of the impasse; and for several years the uneasy dominance of the 'ulama continued.

Mubarak's Religious Views

The religious views of Mubarak were the logical outcome of his comprehensive learning and objective outlook. Abu'l Fazl says that although he belonged, like his ancestors, to the school of the Hanafi law, he always took a broad view of the questions posed to him and did not 'merely repeat legal maxims when confronted with difficult matters. He delved deep into all religious and philosophical subjects and tried to discover their essence and spirit. His training in the philosophy of Ibn Sina and the Ishraqi wisdom, and his studies in sufism, had given him a broader outlook than most orthodox scholars. He once said:

> "There is no creed that may not be mistaken in some particular, nor any that is entirely false; so if anyone, speaking from his conscience[2] mentions with favour a doctrine which seems at variance with his own faith, his motives should not be misunderstood, and people should not rise to denounce him."[3]

Later on he informed Bir Bal, "There are innovations in our religion, just as there are interpolations in your holy books; it is therefore impossible to trust either (of the accretions)."[1] He did not dogmatically believe in the Ash'ari theology, and examined the sectarian and theological controversies in their true historical perspective. He strongly denounced spurious traditions and tendentious material which uncritical scholars had thrust into theological works for their own political and religious motives and which had become an integral part of Islamic belief.

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 208; Jarrett III, p. 495.

[2] Abu'l Fazl, *Mukatibat i-'Allami* or *Har Seh Daftar* (Delhi, 1846), III, p. 321.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 327.

Badauni, according to whom Shaikh Mubarak was one of the greatest sage of the age, says:

> "For some time during the reign of the Afghans he used to keep company with Shaikh 'Ala'i. At the beginning of the Emperor's reign, when the Naqshbandi order was in great esteem, he adapted himself to their rule, and for some time he was attracted to the Hamadani Shaikhs; and at last when the Iraqis (Shi'is) were in great favour at Court, he spoke as one of their persuasion. 'Converse with men according to their understanding' was his advice; and he practised it always."[2]

But Badauni shows up his own mental tensions, when in his biographical note on Shaikh Mubarak he says:

> "The saying of the common people, that the son brings curses on his father is exemplified in his case, just as happened in the case of Yazid,[3] in respect of whom some imprudently and presumptuously say, 'Curse be on Yazid and his father."[4]

Badauni, of course, regarded Faizi and Abu'l Fazl with the deepest dislike; and his opinion of them made him less than just to their father, and his own teacher.

In fact, Shaikh Mubarak defended Shaikh Ala'i in the teeth of opposition and followed puritanical orthodox practices when Mahdawis were everywhere persecuted. He supported the Shi'is when they were the targets of the bitterest possible attack from the 'ulama. He was no opportunist or time server; he never hesitated to court danger or even disaster by expressing his views fearlessly.

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 312.

[2] *MT*, III, p. 74; Haig, pp. 118-19.

[3] Yazid bin Mu'awiyah, the second Umaiyad Caliph (680-683) is detested by all Shi'is for killing Husain, the son of 'Ali and the grandson of Muhammad; the Sunnis, while they regard the tragedy with regret, and do not hold him in high honour, refrain from openly cursing him.

[4] *MT*, III, p. 75; Haig, p. 120.

Considerable importance was attached to his religious and metaphysical views by the intellectuals of his day. He left an indelible impression upon the leaders of other religions who after their admission to Akbar's court came in contact with him. Abu'l Fazl gives us to understand that his father, while at Ahmadabad, had qualified himself for *ijtihad*[1] because of his almost universal learning.[2] It seems that Shaikh Mubarak dreamt a vain dream of reorienting Islamic beliefs by unearthing the basic truths from the current schools of Islamic thought and sects, and of reconciling them with each other. He relied upon his disciples for the success of his mission; but he failed to realise that under the religious dispensation of those days, even the greatest men of religion would have been shackled. Even if he had not been so mercilessly opposed by the Court 'ulama and their patrons, the chances of the success of his claim for *ijtihad* were bleak because of the age-old prejudices against it. It was easier to appeal to credulity; far more difficult to appeal to reason and the truth. Had Shaikh Mubarak made claims based on an alleged Divine inspiration, such as being a Mahdi or a Mujaddid, his following would have been enormous.

Other Sons and Daughters of Shaikh Mubarak

Abu'l Barkat was born on the night of 17 Shauwal 960/26 September 1553. He was not interested in studies and took up a military career.

Abu'l Khair was born on 22 Jumada I 967/18 February 1560.[3] He was Abu'l Fazl's favourite and looked after his library.[4]

Abu'l Makarim was born on 23 Shauwal 976/10 April 1569. In his early life he was subject to fits of epilepsy, but Shaikh Mubarak's efforts cured him. Like all the other sons of Shaikh Mubarak, he obtained his early education under his father and subsequently studied under the tutelage of Amir Fathu'llah Shirazi.

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[1] *EI*, new, III, pp. 1026-27; See *Infra*

[2] *A'in*, III, p. 203; Jarrett, III, p. 483.

[3] *A'in*, III, p.219.

[4] *Mukatabat i-'Allami*, II, pp. 173-76.

Abu Turab was born of another wife on 23 Zu'l Hijja 988/29 January 1582.

Abu Hamid was born on 3 Rabi'II 1002/27 December 1593.

Abu Rashid was born on 1 Jumada I 1002/23 January 1594.

The last two were born of concubines, posthumously.[1] Despite the great age of the Shaikh (he was in his 89th year when he died on 27 Zu'l qa'da 1001/15 August 1593), their paternity was not doubted.

Abu'l Fazl has not given an account of his sisters. It seems that Shaikh Mubarak had four daughters, all of whom were born very late. One of them was married to Khudawand Khan Dakhini,[2] a Shi'i, the second was married to Husamu'd Din the son of Ghazi Khan Badakhshi, who later on distinguished himself as a follower of the Naqshbandi saint, Khwaja Baqi Billah.[3] The third was married to a son of Raja 'Ali Khan, the ruler of Khandesh;[4] and the fourth was married to Shaikh Salim Chishti's grandson, Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Din Chishti to whom Jahangir, after his accession, had awarded the title of I'tiqadu'd-Dawla and Islam Khan. From the mansab of 4000 he was given in Jahangir's third year (1607-08), Islam Khan rose to the rank of 6000 before his sudden death, aged 42 in 1613.[5]

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 219.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 373.

[3] *MRM*, p. 194.

[4] *MT*, II, p. 372.

[5] *Tuzuk i-Jahangiri* English translation by A. Rogers and H. Beveridge, (Delhi, 1968), I, pp. 31, 256-57.

CHAPTER 3

ABU'L FAZL'S RELIGIOUS DISCUSSIONS

(*The 'Ibadat Khana*)

The psychological tensions which began to disturb Abu'l Fazl from the age of twenty greatly worried his father. It was not possible to advice him to become an ascetic and abandon the world; nor would he be kept shackled to the routine of the seminary. A wider field for the proper use of his capacities and energies had to be discovered. He says:

> "By the machinations of my extraordinary soul, the picture of ambition had been erased from the porch of my mind, and the longing for asceticism exhibited its power. I was on the point of treading the desert of frenzy with bared head and foot, breaking to pieces the enclosing wall of my environment, and taking the path of liberation."[1]

Shaikh Faizi's verses elicited the appreciation of the Emperor and other courtiers but he had little influence at Court. However, Abu'l Fazl's scholarly achievements could not have remained unknown to Akbar, and Faizi joined a number of sincere friends, relations and favourite disciples in urging him to join the imperial service. Shaikh Mubarak, after his visit to Akbar, seems to have realised that the Emperor's mind was receptive enough to suggestions or change in religious policy.

The eminent saint and scholar, Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Daula Simnani, who in his youth served the Ilkhan ruler of Persia with distinction, used to repent in his old age for having preferred the life of an ascetic to that of a counsellor to rulers. He believed that the best place to introduce reforms in society and strengthen the cause of the faith was the royal court.[2] This weighty precedent was probably used by Shaikh Mubarak to persuade his son to carve out a place for his limitless fund of energy at the imperial court. He said:

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[1] *AN*, II, p. 388; Bev, II, p. 567.

[2] Sistani, *Iqbaliya* or *Chihil Majlis* (British Museum Ms. Or. 9275), f. 41b.

> "The piety and knowledge of God possessed by this divinely born jewel (Akbar) are not imperfectly known to anyone. At this day he is the leader of the caravans both of society and seclusion; the meeting of the oceans of realm and religion; and the dawn of the lights of form and substance. The multiplicity of his external associations does not hold him back from essential Unity. Outwardly bound, he is inwardly free. From him comes the solution of spiritual and temporal matters."[1]

On 31 March 1574, Akbar arrived at Fathpur-Sikri after a visit to Ajmer, where he had liquidated the resistance of Mal Deo's second son Chandra Sen, and captured Siwana. Meanwhile Khan i-Khanan Mun'im Khan's expedition against Dawud Khan, the last independent ruler of Bengal, were not making satisfactory headway. Akbar proceeded from Fathpur to Agra to make preparations to join the expedition in person. At Agra, Abu'l Fazl took the occasion to present to him his commentary on the *Kursi*[2] verse, a work much admired by scholars.[3] Akbar, to the author's great satisfaction, showed interest in it, and Abu'l Fazl was able to boast that he owed to no noble the favour of being introduced at Court. He says:

> "Without any stain on my spirit's skirt from corrupt canvassing; without wearing the foot of search in the wide plain of avidity; and before the shame of expectation could touch me, or self-respect be thrown away; without any mediation of this or that person, and without having to supplicate anyone, the Shahinshah's graciousness laid hold of me, and raised me from the hollow of obscurity to the height of lofty rank."[4]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 185; Bev, III, p. 119.

[2] Kursi means knowledge; Verse 255, Chapter 2 of the Qur'an is known as the Kursi verse, for it proclaims that Divine knowledge is all-comprehensive. The next verse says, "There is no compulsion in religion—the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error. So whoever disbelieves in the devil and believes in Allah, he indeed lays hold on the firmest handle, which shall never break. And Allah is Hearing, Knowing."

[3] *MT*, II, p. 198; Lowe, p. 201.

[4] *AN*, II, p. 388; Bev, II, p. 567.

This visit was brief, however; and his contact with the Emperor was cut short, because on 15 June 1574 Akbar and his household embarked on a fleet of boats and set off down the Jumna for Patna. With him went a select party of nobles, including Raja Bhagwan Das, Raja Man Singh, Zain Khan Koka; scholars like Naqib Khan, Mir Sharif, and Hakim 'Ainu'l-Mulk, and 'ulama, such as Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, and Qazi Ya'qub; while the army marched overland to join the Emperor at Patna. Although Faizi was given a place among the scholars, Abu'l Fazl as a newcomer at Court, was left behind.

Akbar sailed leisurely, hoping that the alliance between the Rajput *zamindars* of Bihar and the Afghans might be broken by a show of force alone. He found time to listen to mystical songs and indulge in other intellectual activities. The mystic poetry recited by Mir Sharif, the brother of Naqib Khan, moved his soul. After conquering Patna, and setting the administration of Bihar in order, Akbar turned northwards. Marching to Ajmer, Patiyali and Delhi, he sent further forces against Chandra Sen, who had not yet submitted. Leaving Ajmer, on 18 January 1575 Akbar returned to Fathpur[1] where he felt that he had leisure to devote himself exclusively to religious affairs and meditation.

During his eastern expedition, Akbar spoke on one occasion of Abu'l Fazl. Faizi wrote to his brother of the Emperor's interest in him, but lack of money for the journey precluded him from joining the Imperial camp.[2] At Ajmer, he was again remembered by the Emperor, and Faizi mentioned his brother's intense longing to serve the Court. After Akbar's arrival at Fathpur, Abu'l Fazl went thither and one Friday met the Emperor in the Jami' mosque. He presented a commentary on the *Fath*[3] chapter of the Qur'an which he had composed after Akbar's conquest in the east. This work was greatly admired both by contemporary scholars and the Emperor. Badauni does not mention Abu'l Fazl's second Commentary and says:

"Abu'l Fazl having entered the Court obtained service. He laid before the Emperor a Commentary on the *Kursi* verse, which contained a good many subtleties from the Qur'an; and though people said it was written by his father, Abu'l Fazl was much praised. The numerical value of the letters in the words *Tafsir i-Akbari*[1] gives the date of its completion. The Emperor praised it, chiefly because he expected to find in Abu'l Fazl a man capable of teaching a lesson to the Mullas (whose pride certainly resemble that of Pharaoh), though this expectation was opposed to the confidence which His Majesty had reposed in the author of these pages."[2]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 112; Bev, III, p. 157.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 114; Bev, III, p. 161.

[3] Chapter 48. It starts with the verse "Surely we have granted thee a clear victory." The victory referred to is the truce at Hudaibiyah in 6/626, and it was regarded as a prophecy of further victories. The commentary was therefore a most appropriate presentation.

In fact, *Tafsir i-Akbari* is the chronogram of his Commentary on the *Fath* chapter which Badauni does not mention. Its preamble, and the concluding portions, are reproduced in the third volume of the *Makatabat i-'Allami*. The important portions of the Commentary are neatly adorned with phrases showing admiration of Akbar's achievement in the realm of conquest and administration.[3]

Upon his admission at Court, Abu'l Fazl found a wide field for his intellectual activities. His restless mind, after a long period of intense depression and uncertainty, obtained a suitable environment for its proper development. Like all newcomers to the Court, he was given a low *mansab* (rank) of twenty and was required to bring the required number of horses to be branded.[4] He worked assiduously, and with complete faith in the Emperor's judgment of talent; and his loyalty steadily carried him to higher and higher ranks.

The 'Ibadat Khana

Like Jews and Christians, the Muslims also indulged in public arguments on points of theology both to satisfy intellectual curiosity and to prove the superiority of their faith over other religions. Sectarian conflicts and such problems as free-will, predestination, theories regarding the creation of the Qur'an and kindred problems, which had been canvassed from the Umaiyad period (661-750) on, interested all classes of Muslims. The gradual Islamization of their subjects brought about during the Umaiyad and the 'Abbasid (750-1258) rule, the radiation of ideas from the great centres of civilization and culture in the East, and the influence of the West, especially the Byzantine empire, much enlarged the scope of debates. The Caliphs, the Sultans, their nobles and the affluent section of Muslim society evinced a keen interest in polemics and patronised scholars who specialized in the art. Indeed, it sometimes degenerated into a form of popular sport. Some jurists declined to discuss general questions of law unless specific problems were posed to them. In India the Delhi Sultans, and later the provincial rulers, encouraged this kind of debate and assembled scholars of different shades of opinion with the express purpose of raising the tone and standard of discussions. Special assemblies were convened to settle such controversial topics as the legality of *sama'*[1] or the claims of the Mahdawis.[2] The Ilkhanid Mongols, after embracing Islam, took special interest in discussions between 'ulama and sufis and non-Muslims, as well as in sectarian controversies between Muslims. This tradition continued to be followed down to the time of Sultan Husain Mirza Baiqara of Herat (1469-1506) who had assembled a galaxy of scholars, intellectuals and poets.[3]

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[1] Commentary of Akbar's time 983/1575.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 198; Lowe, p. 201.

[3] *Mukatabat i-'Allami* (Delhi, 1846), III, pp. 218-20.

[4] *MT*, II, p. 206; Lowe, p. 209.

Akbar, too, evinced a keen interest in religious and intellectual discussions early in his reign. He hoped both to educate himself and to satisfy his soul. As he possessed a widely open mind, the mystical and metaphysical controversies stimulated his interest in the problems of mankind in general; and he acquired a sound grasp of history. These polemics were not, however, conducted by the participants in the right spirit of fenquiry and research but rather with a view to obtaining avours and promotions at the Court.

An account of one of the early debates is found in the history of Humayun and Akbar compiled by Bayazid Biyat, and shows how the clique of Court 'ulama sought to humiliate other scholars, particularly the newcomers. After the birth of Prince Murad, on 3 Muharram 978/7 June 1570, Bayazid Biyat's former patron Khan i-Khanan Mun'im Khan paid a hurried visit to congratulate the Emperor on the birth of his son and to obtain further orders about the administration of the Eastern provinces; on the occasion religious debates were also held. One Mulla Muflis, an eminent logician in whom Akbar took considerable interest, was at that time a target of attack by Makhdumu'l Mulk and Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi. Some distinguished disciples of Turkish Mullas had come to the Court, and they joined in deluging Mulla Muflis with complicated and awkward questions. Makhdumu'l Mulk posed a problem to the Mulla. Before he had finished his reply, Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi put him another question. This irritated Mulla Muflis, who said, "O! Little slave, wait till I am able to finish the reply to the question put to me by the bigger slave; then I shall answer your queries." The words of the Mulla came to be widely known and reached as far as Mecca.[1]

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[1] cf. account of the discussion of Qazi Sa'd and Qazi 'Imad with Qazi Hamidu'd Din Nagauri in 'Isami, *Futuhu's Salatin* (Madras, 1948), pp. 117-20.

[2] *MRM*, pp. 123-25.

[3] *Babur Nama* in S.A.A. Rizvi, *Mughul Kalin Bharat*, Hindi (Aligarh, 1960), pp. 577-96.

On another occasion, when Mulla Muflis presented to the Emperor a work called *Tafsir i-Hafiz*, which he had compiled, Hajji Ibrahim Sihrindi, who, according to Badauni, was rude, quarrelsome, and contentious in debates, said: "How is Musa (Moses) declined and what is the root of the word?" The Mulla did not have the wit to give the right answer. This established the reputation of Hajji Ibrahim Sihrindi as a debater, which Badauni considered as one of the many injustices of the time. Eventually, the Mulla was so disheartened that he obtained the Emperor's leave to go to Mecca and settle there. He died in 989/1580-81.[2]

By the beginning of 1575, Akbar's mind was in turmoil. Badauni, who had recently entered the Emperor's court, describes the situation well:

> "For many years previously the Emperor had gained a succession of remarkable and decisive victories. The empire had grown in extent from day to day; everything turned out according to his will, and no opponent was left in the whole world. His Majesty had come in close contact with

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[1] Bayazid, Biyat, *Tazkira i-Humayun wa Akbar* (Calcutta, 1941), pp. 307-08.
[2] *MT*, II, pp. 188-89; Lowe, pp. 190-91.

ascetics and the custodians of the exalted tomb of his reverence the late Khwaja (Mu'inu'd Din Chishti), and passed much of his time in discussing the 'word of God' and the 'word of the Prophet.' Questions regarding sufism, learned discussions, enquiries into subtleties of philosophy and *fiqh* increasingly attracted His Majesty's attention. He spent whole nights repeating the name of the Almighty God; he continually occupied himself in pronouncing *Ya Huwa*[1] and *Ya Hadi*,[2] which he had learnt through the Divine inspiration. His heart was full of reverence for Him, who is the true Giver. Moved by a feeling of gratitude for his past successes, he would sit many a morning alone in prayer and meditation on a large flat stone from an old ruined building, which lay near the palace in a lonely spot, savouring the bliss of the early hours of dawn. He had heard that Sulaiman Kararani (1564-72), the ruler of Bengal, used every night to offer up *tahajjud*[3] prayers in the company of some 150 renowned shaikhs and 'ulama, and used to remain in their society till morning listening to commentaries and exhortations, and then, after offering up the morning prayers, he would occupy himself in state business, and the affairs of the army, and his subjects; and that he appointed a time for everything and never wasted a moment."

Further news arrived from Badakhshan of Mirza Sulaiman, who was a prince of sufi tendencies who had become a *sahib hal* (a man engrossed in sufic ecstasy) and enrolled *murids* (disciples). For these urgent reasons he caused the former cell of Shaikh 'Abdu'llah Niyazi Sihrindi, who had previously been a disciple of Shaikh Islam (Salim) Chishti, but had afterwards joined the *da'ira* of the Mahdawis,[4] as it has been stated earlier, to be rebuilt and surrounded on all four sides by spacious galleries (*aiwan*). He also finished the construction of the Anup Tala'o tank. He named that cell

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[1] "O He" (God).

[2] "O Guide."

[3] A prayer repeated during the night.

[4] Lowe translates it as a circle of Mahadeva and identifying it with Siva says that he had Hinduized (Lowe, p. 204). Lowe did not have any knowledge of the *da'iras* of the Mahdawis, cf. Mahdawi Da'iras in *Muslim Revivalist Movement in Northern India*, pp. 106-34, cf. Shaikh 'Abdu'llah Niyazi (*Ibid*, pp. 122-30).

> the 'Ibadat-Khana; gradually it came to be known as *'Iyadat-Khana* (a house for the visitation of the sick).[1]

Abu'l Fazl corroborates Badauni in his own way. He says:

> "Although Almighty God raised that man of pure disposition (Akbar) to lofty heights, to increased territory, and gave him a large number of devoted attendants; and although he blessed him with gaining possession of the wonders of the world, the opening of the doors of knowledge, and lofty perception, yet that suppliant to the Deity increased his supplications, and the thirst for inquiry augmented."[2]

The order for the erection of the 'Ibadat Khana was given in Zu'l-qa'da 982/February-March 1575. According to Nizamu'd Din Ahmad, the Emperor ordered that a simple and elegant building should be constructed on one side of the imperial palace. Accordingly an edifice comprising four *aiwans* was completed.[3]

V.A. Smith on the basis of his collation of the *Tabaqat i-Akbari*, *Muntakhabu't-Tawarikh* and *Akbar Nama* says:

> "The House of worship was a large rectangular chamber built around a small structure representing a hermit's cell. The space on each side of the cell was treated as a separate hall or section and probably was railed or curtained off from its neighbours. The building was elaborate and could accommodate a numerous company. It was situated in the gardens of the palace, near Salim Chishti's premises, and somewhere at the back of the great mosque, a little to the north-west, close to gardens which still exist, or existed when E.W. Smith made his admirable survey some years ago. The author found fragments of a rich circular capital, which must have belonged, 'to the south of the tank abutting on the gateway leading to the large Turkish baths by the Record Chamber.' That site, at the south-east corner of the royal edifices and about 300 yards a little to the north-east from the King's Gate of the great mosque, cannot be the site of the House of Worship, as suggested by E.W. Smith. The spot referred to never can have been 'in the gardens of the

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 201-02; Lowe, pp. 203-04.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 112; Bev, III, p. 157.

[3] *TA*, II, p. 311.

palace,' and it is not near the Chishti premises."[1]

The conclusions of Smith are based on English translations of the authorities used by him. He had read *Tabaqat-i Akbari* in the translation of Elliot and Dowson. The sentence: "*Dar Janb-i-Daulatkhana-i-Ali, asas-i-Kashana-i-Sufiyana wa nishiman be-safa Sazand*" has been translated as "in the gardens of the royal palaces, a refuge for sufis and a home for holy men." "*Dar janb-i-Daulatkhana-i-Ali*" cannot be translated as "in the gardens of the royal palace." Similarly "*Kashana-i-Sufiyana wa nishiman ba safa* cannot be rendered as "refuge for sufis, and a home for holy men."[2] The phrase means "a sufi-like dwelling" or "a simple dwelling and an elegant edifice." The nouns *kashana* and *nishiman* indicate the modesty and the adjectives *sufiyana* and *safa* point out its simplicity and elegance. Thus the *Tabaqat i-Akbari* does not allow us to conclude that the edifice was of any great size. The use of the services of *mi'maran i-hunar-pisha* (skilful architects) and *banayan i-daqiqa andish* (clever builders) does not necessarily mean that the edifice was of "no small size and pretensions." The word *aiwan* in all the three authorities was read by Smith as *diwan*[3] and translated as "hall"; while it is more appropriate to translate it as "open gallery," "portico," or even with Beveridge, as "verandah;"[4] a translation rejected by Smith. Primarily an *aiwan* is a large recess looking on to an open court.

The contemporary authorities tell that the 'Ibadat Khana was not far from the imperial palace Daulat Khana, close enough to allow Akbar to come and go without much inconvenience. The cell of Shaikh 'Abdu'llah Niyazi was apparently converted into a domed or rectangular hall, with four *aiwans* around it, or possibly built against its sides. Its tumbled and shapeless ruins stand, separated only by the modern road, to the east of the north-eastern bastion of the great mosque at Fathpur-Sikri; inside the mosque, Shaikh Salim's new *khanqah* was built.[5]

According to 'Arif Qandahari, one of the earliest authorities on Akbar's reign, the Emperor, after completing all the state business, would repair each Thursday night to the 'Ibadat

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[1] Akbar's "House of Worship" or '*Ibadat Khana*, *JRAS*, Oct., 1917, pp. 720-21. [2] *Tabaqat i-Akbari*, p. 311.

[3] Akbar's "House of Worship," *JRAS*, Oct., 1917, p. 718.

[4] Bev, III, p. 157. [5] *MT*, II, pp. 73, 109.

Khana. Having summoned an assembly of his favourites, he used to sit "in the four *suffas*, which told the story of the purity of his auspicious heart."[1] *Suffa* (sofa) is a bench, a dias or a platform; if covered, it may mean an *aiwan*.[2] Quickly built early in 1575, the edifice was used for select meetings to discuss various religious and philosophical topics.[3]

It seems that when the number of the participants was large, they gathered in the courtyard of the Anup Tala'o.[4] For informal discussions scholars were admitted by the Emperor to his bedroom *(khilwatkada i-khass* or *khwabgab)*, where he listened to their conversation with rapt attention.

Although meetings in the 'Ibadat Khana were generally held on Thursday nights, discussion was often resumed on Friday, when the Emperor, after offering Friday prayers, paid a visit to the new *khanqah* of Shaikh Salim in the mosque and then walked over to the 'Ibadat Khana. Only shaikhs (sufis), 'ulama, learned men and a few of the Emperor's favourite companions and attendants were admitted. All kinds of instructive and useful topics were discussed; but, unlike Akbar, not all the participants were interested in the enquiry after truth. A serious dispute over the order of precedence led to the classification of the participants into four categories, and separate seats were allocated to each. Nobles were required to sit towards the east, saiyids towards the west, sufis towards the south; and the 'ulama and the philosophers trained in the dialectics of the Greeks were ordered to sit towards the north.[5] Thus the northern gallery was the hub of the wheel of discussion. The nobles and the courtiers observed the inclinations of the Emperor and adjusted their views accordingly or kept quiet. The Emperor moved from group to group and conversed with each of them.

A large number of fine books which were obtained as booty on the conquest of Gujarat from the library of 'Itimad Khan, were distributed by the Emperor himself to the 'ulama and learned men. Quantities of perfume were used to scent the air in the 'Ibadat Khana, and large sums of money were distributed to the deserving and needy who found admission there through the Emperor's favourites.[1]

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[1] Muhammad 'Arif Qandahari, *Tarikh i-Akbari* (Rampur, 1962), p. 40.

[2] F. Steingas, *Persian-English Dictionary*, p. 788.

[3] *Tarikh i-Akbari*, pp. 40-41.

[4] *MT*, II, p. 201; III, p. 129.

[5] *MT*, II, p. 202.

The continued bickerings and quarrels of the 'ulama disillusioned the Emperor. Shaikh Nuru'l Haq, the son of Shaikh Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi, says that Akbar used to harangue them:

> "My sole object, O wise men and Mullas, is to ascertain the truth, to find out and discover the Reality. Take care, therefore, that you are not induced to conceal the truth, or to say anything contrary to the truth because of your human passions. If you do, you are responsible before God for the consequence of your impiety."[2]

The 'ulama tended to lose self control when they could not browbeat their opponents into submission. Badauni says, "One night, all at once the vein (of pride) in the neck of the 'ulama of the time swelled up, and a horrid noise and clamour ensued. His Majesty got very angry at their rude behaviour, and said to me, In future, report anyone of the 'ulama who talks nonsense and cannot behave himself, and I shall make him leave the assembly. Badauni said gently to Asaf Khan,[3] "If I carried out this order, most of the 'Ulama would have to leave." When Akbar heard the whispers he asked Badauni to tell him what he had said. On hearing his answer he was greatly pleased and repeated his remarks to those sitting near him.[4]

Akbar encouraged his nobles and other scholars to recommend new scholars for him to invite to participate in the discussions. Those who showed talent obtained a permanent position in the Court, while the mediocre were excluded. Abu'l Fazl says, "A set of wisdom-loving, judicious men was in readiness to propound questions and to record the subtle views expressed there."[5]

In the earlier discussions that took place in Akbar's court, the domination of the Makhdumu'l Mulk, the Sadru's Sudur and Hajji Ibrahim Sihrindi made the newcomers despair of success and they seem to have avoided taking part in the debates. When Akbar asked Qazizada Shukr, whom he had made Qazi of Mathura, "Why don't you join the discussions?" he answered, "If Hajji Ibrahim were to ask how to decline 'Isa (Jesus) what answer could I give?"[1] The position, however, gradually changed; the number of newcomers increased.

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 202-03.

[2] Nuru'l Haq, *Zubdatu't Tawarikh* (Ethe, 290), f. 157b.

[3] See *Infra*. [4] *MT*, II, p. 202.

[5] *AN*, III, p. 113; Bev, III, p. 160.

Special efforts were made to associate distinguished sufis with the activities of the 'Ibadat Khana. Jalal Khan Qurchi introduced Shaikh Ziya'u'llah, the son of Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus, who before long adjusted himself to the atmosphere there.[2] Shaikh Badru'd Din, a son of Shaikh Salim Chishti was also invited to participate in the activities of the 'Ibadat Khana. Given only to prayer and meditation, he committed many breaches of the Court etiquette and seems to have not been able to fit himself into the new environment. Disgusted, he left Fathpur-Sikri for Ajmer; travelled thence to Gujarat; and then to Mecca.[3] Malik Muhammad Piyaru, another new entrant, because of his outstanding scholarship and knowledge of *tafsir* and *hadit* enjoyed the Emperor's respect.[4] Shaikh 'Abdu'llah Niyazi, whose cell formed the nucleus of the structure of the 'Ibadat Khana, was also summoned from Sihrind, where he lived in retirement. The Emperor interviewed him personally, but Badauni says that he informed the Emperor that he had forsaken his belief in the Mahdawi doctrines.[5]

The most distinguished foreign visitor was Mirza Sulaiman, who reached the neighbourhood of Fathpur-Sikri, on 15 Rajab 983/20 October 1575. A warm welcome was given to him. He frequently visited the 'Ibadat Khana by night and enjoyed the company of the sufis and the 'ulama. A man of sufic temperament, he was often seized with ecstasy and uttered loud cries. He never neglected to pray with the congregation. One day, after leading the afternoon prayers, Badauni recited the *du'a'* (invocations) only. The Mirza objected that he had not recited the *fatiha* (the first chapter of the Qur'an). Badauni explained that in the time of the Prophet the reciting of the *fatiha* after prayers was not customary and some of the traditions pronounced it to be improper. Mirza Sulaiman said, "Do you mean to say that theological knowledge or 'ulama did not exist in *Wilayat* (Iran and Central Asia) where the recitation of *fatiha* is customary." Badauni said, "We have to do with the written Law, not with *taqlid*."[1] The Emperor, however, to please the Mirza, ordered that in future it should be recited. Badauni reluctantly obeyed the orders though he did not fail to bring tradition to the notice of the Mirza in support of his contention.[2]

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 188; Lowe, p. 191. The hint is to the Mulla Muflis embarrassment where he could not decline Musa; See *Supra*.

[2] *MT*, II, pp. 201-02; III, pp. 119-20.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 212.

[4] *MT*, III, p. 140.

[5] *MT*, III, p. 46.

In the early phase of the activities of the 'Ibadat Khana, the theories of Shaikh Bhawan, a brahman from the Deccan who had embraced Islam, created a considerable sensation. He claimed that there were passages in *Atharva Veda* which said that unless some of these laid down in it were recited, no one could obtain salvation. One of these passages several times contained the letter *lam* (L) which was alleged to resemble the sound of the letter *lam* in the Muslim *kalima*.[3] Certain injunctions in the work as interpreted by Shaikh Bhawan—that Hindus might under certain circumstances eat beef, and that they should bury their dead, but not burn them—aroused considerable interest among the Muslims.[4]

As long as none but Sunnis were admitted to the 'Ibadat Khana, the discussions centred around some significant Islamic beliefs like the nature of the Prophet's *mi'raj* (Muhammad's night journey to heaven), *wahy* and *ilham*[5] (divine revelations and inspirations), miracles of the Prophets, especially Muhammad's miraculous splitting of the moon, and truth regarding the *jinn*[6] (demons), angels and other supernatural beings. The abrogated verses of the Qur'an,[1] the conclusions drawn from them, *ahrif*[2] in the *hadis*, problems arising out of *taqlid*, and such legalistic questions as the number of wives one was allowed to marry,[54] were scrutinised. Much time was spent in the discussion of the *zibh* (killing of an animal in the manner prescribed by Islamic law) of a deer when it was held by the neck by a tiger.[4] Subtle questions like the eternity of the World and its Creator and the nature of Godhead and the soul, and problems relating to the life after death were also debated. The sufic practice of *sama'* and the organisation of the movement were sought out for attack, but explanations of the subtleties of *Tauhid i-Wujudi* were eagerly demanded.[5]

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[1] As opposed to *ijtihad* or *tahqiq*, it involved obedience to traditional Islamic practices.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 217; Lowe, pp. 219-20.

[3] The Muslim confession of faith.

[4] *MT*, II, pp. 212-13.

[5] *Wahy* is the divine revelation which Muhammad received from the angel Gabriel. *Ilham* is also a divine inspiration, but unlike *wahy* does not come from an angel.

[6] The *Qur'an* frequently refers to *jinns*, or devils, created from fire, as opposed to men, created from earth. Orthodox Muslims believe *jinns* exist, and consider them some form of supernatural being. Rationalists, even in medieval times, did not believe in them, and gave an allegorical meaning to the verses; in modern Quranic interpretation, the medieval rationalist view is followed.

The topics of discussion were in no way original or startling, but some of them were new indeed for an illiterate like Akbar. Most of them had been discussed since the first century of Islam and innumerable interpretation and glosses already existed. The philosophers adopted the line of argument as enunciated in the works of Ibn Sina, and Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi Maqtul and their commentators. While the 'ulama adopted a very rigid line, the philosophers made adaptations in accordance with the exigencies of time. The 'ulama did not go beyond quoting Ghazali and relied mainly on involved arguments and shibboleths. The discussions were initiated by questioning the theories of some important authority[6] but invariably they degenerated into mutual fault-finding, with theological and philosophical problems relegated to the background; and cynical nobles derived much amusement therefrom. When Hajji Ibrahim Sihrindi and Abu'l Fazl were set up against Makhdumu'l Mulk, the shortcomings of that holyman's *fatwas* and the meanness of his character were embarrassingly exposed.

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[1] There is considerable difference of opinion on the abrogation of the verses of the Qur'an among interpreters of the verses on the subject (Ch. 2, Verse 106). Maulana Muhammad 'Ali says, "What happened really was this, that when a commentator could not reconcile one verse with another, he held the verse to be abrogated by the other, but another who, giving deeper thought was able to effect a reconciliation between the two, rejected abrogation. This seems to be the basis on which the theory of abrogation of Quranic verses rests,..." The Maulana says that not a single *hadis* of the Prophet speaks of abrogation, and only the commentators of the *Qur'an* hold this view (*The Holy Qur'an*, Lahore, 1963), pp. 47-48.

[2] Falsification of the *hadis* and *fiqh*.

[3] Marriage in Islam is a contract, and it is obligatory. Celibacy is expressly forbidden. Up to four marriages are permitted, but under restrictive conditions.

[4] Faizi Sihrindi, *Akbar Nama* (Ethe, 289), ff. 139b-141a.

[5] *MT*, III, p. 110, 124-25.

[6] For instance once Mirza 'Ali Asaf Khan initiated discussion by quoting the following quatrain from the *Lawa'ih* of Maulana 'Abdu'r Rahman Jami:

One night Khan i-Jahan Husain Quli Khan, an important noble, said, "Makhdumu'l Mulk has given a *fatwa*, that the obligation to go on pilgrimage is no longer binding, but even harmful. When people asked him the reason, he said that the two roads to Mecca through Iran and Gujarat, were impracticable because people going overland had to listen to undesirable things (*shi'i tabarra'*) and those going by sea had to undergo the humiliation of entering into a contract with the Portuguese, who issued passports with a picture of Mary and Jesus stamped on them. To make use of the sea route would be to countenance idolatry, hence both were closed."[1] Makhdumu'l Mulk admitted the truth of statement.[2] The *fatwa* amounted to opposition to Akbar's policy of encouragement of pilgrimage, through which he sought to extend his influence over Iran and Turkey.

"If thoughts of the rose pass in thy heart, thou becomest a rose,
If thoughts of the passionate nightingale pass, thou becomest a nightingale,
Thou art only an atom, God is all,
If thou accustom thyself to meditate on Him who is all in all, thou will become all."

Asaf Khan asked Shaikh Ziya'u'llah, "How can God the most Holy be described as 'all' or 'the whole,' since He is above being defined as a part or the whole?" The Shaikh was unable to answer and Mulla Badauni, intervening, explained: "The meaning of these passages is that whatever can be conceived, whether it be the whole or a part, is nothing but God, and that besides Him there is no true existence." *MT*, III, p. 124; Haig, pp. 180-81.

[1] Professor Mujeeb says that "This was not only Maulana 'Abdullah's opinion, but in fact the orthodox position. The obligation to perform the *hajj* had to be asserted and proved early in the nineteenth century, when Sayyid Ahmad Shahid led a band of pilgrims to Mecca." Professor Mujeeb quotes no authority for his earlier statement and contradicts himself by continuing "Pilgrimages, however, continued to be made all the time". [Muhammad Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, (London, 1967), p. 240, n. 7] Did Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi, the two sons of Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi, Shah Wali Ullah and thousands of other pilgrims go to the Holy Places in violation, of the orthodox position.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 203; Lowe, p. 206.

A serious charge, regarding Mukhdumu'l Malk's evasion of *zakat*, was also brought forward for discussion. Towards the end of each year he would make over all his property to his wife, but before the year had run out he would take it back again. *Zakat*[1] is payable on property defined by Law, provided that one has been in possession of it for one complete year *(haul al-haul)*. Makhdumu'l Mulk's device, which was by no means original,[2] absolved both husband and wife from the payment of *zakat*.[3] His high handed conduct sufis, *darweshes* and deserving people when administering religious grants in the Punjab were also discussed, to his great embarrassment.[4]

At that time the question that most occupied the Emperor's mind was the number of free born women that one was legally permitted to marry. Badauni, who played a leading role in piloting the discussion successfully in favour of Akbar, has given a detailed account of it. He says:

> "The lawyers answered that during one specific period of time, not more than four free born women could be married. The Emperor answered that in his youth he had not adhered to this limit and had married what number of women he pleased, both free born and slave; he now wanted to know what remedy the law provided for his case. Most expressed their opinions; then the Emperor observed that Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi had once told him that one of the *mujtahids* had allowed as many as nine wives. Some of the 'ulama present replied that the *mujtahid* alluded to was Ibn Abi Laila, and that some had even allowed eighteen from a too literal translation of the verse of the Qur'an, "Marry whatever women you like, two and two, and three and three and four and four,[5] but this interpretation is rejected and should

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[1] The alms-tax is mentioned in several verses of the *Qur'an*. On fruits and grapes it is to be paid at once at the harvest; on cattle, gold and silver and merchandise it is paid after one years uninterrupted possession. (*IA*, old IV, pp. 1202-04).

[2] Abu'l Kalam Azad, *Tazkira* (Lahore, reprint n.d.) part I, p. 63.

[3] The conditions of one year's uninterrupted possession did not apply. *Najatu'r Rashid* relates a different anecdote of the evasion.

[4] *MT*, III, pp. 203-04.

[5] Chapter IV, 3. The complete verse is, from Muhammad 'Ali's translation:

not be followed."[1]

The Emperor then sent a message to Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi who replied that he had merely wished to point out to the Emperor that a difference of opinion existed on this point among lawyers, but that he had not given a *fatwa* in order to legalise irregular marriage proceedings. This annoyed the Emperor very much and he said, "The Shaikh exhibits hypocrisy. He told me a very different thing then from what he tells me now." Because of such diverse traditions relating to this subject, the 'ulama decreed that by *mut'ah*[2] but not by *nikah*[3] a man might marry any number of wives he pleased; such *mut'ah* marriages were allowed as legal by Imam Malik. The Shi'is loved children born in *mut'ah* more than those born of *nikah* wives. At this point the discussion became heated. Naqib Khan fetched a copy of *al-Muwatta* of Imam Malik, and pointed to a tradition in the book which the Imam had cited as a proof against the legality of *mut'ah* marriages.

Another night Qazi Ya'qub, Shaikh Abu'l Fazl, Hajji Ibrahim and a few other 'alims were invited to meet the Emperor at the *hujra* (pavilion) of the Anup Tala'o (tank), wrongly identified as Turkish Sultana's house. Shaikh Abu'l Fazl set himself to the task of opposing the 'ulama. He laid before the Emperor

> "And if you fear that you cannot do justice to orphans,
> marry such women as seem good to you, two, or three,
> or four; but if you fear that you will not do justice,
> then (marry) only one or that which your right hand possesses.
> This is more proper that you may not do injustice."

According to the Maulana and all modern interpreters the verse does not permit polygamy unconditionally; but the 'ulama or Akbar's court tried to interpret it in different ways. The mujtahid who took nine, interpreted 2+3+4+9; those who took 18, interpreted it 2+2+3+3+4+4+18.

[1] *MT*, II, pp. 207-08; Lowe, pp. 210-11.

[2] *mut'ah*, temporary marriage (according to the Arab lexicographers "marriage of pleasure") which is contracted for a fixed period, and the woman paid. The Qur'an refers to it in Chapter IV verse 28; many traditionists and jurists support it; but Sunnis did not follow the practice. Only a late decision of Malik sanctions it, but not the *Muwatta*, the corpus of Maliki law which he compiled. [*EI*, 3, pp. 774-76].

[3] Marriage as sanctioned by Islamic jurisprudence. According to the Hanafis, every blood relative acting as *wali* (guardian) is entitled to give a virgin under age in marriage without her consent; but a woman married in this way by one not her ascendant is entitled on coming of age to demand that her marriage be declared void by the *qazi* (*EI*, old, 3, pp. 912-14).

several traditions regarding mut'ah marriages, which were probably collected for him by his father. Akbar summoned Badauni and asked his opinion. He said:

> "The conclusion to be drawn from so many contradictory traditions and sectarian customs is, in a word, this, 'Imam Malik and the Shi'is are unanimous in looking upon *mut'ah* marriages as legal. Imam Shafi'i and the great Imam (Abu Hanifa) look upon *mut'ah* marriages as illegal. But should at any time a *qazi* of the Maliki sect decide that a *mut'ah* marriage is legal then it must be regarded as legal, even for Shafi'is and Hanafis. Every other opinion on the subject is idle talk and contumacious."

Akbar was exceedingly pleased. Qazi Ya'qub tried to oppose him but Badauni pressed his point very strongly and the Qazi finally acquiesced. The Emperor dismissed Qazi Ya'qub and appointed in his place a Maliki, Qazi Husain, who immediately gave a *fatwa* making the *mut'ah* marriages legal. The incident undermined the influence of both Makhdumu'l Mulk and Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi.[1]

About this time Hajji Ibrahim Sihrindi's delight in contention involved him in difficulties which he had never anticipated. The Emperor enquired how people would like it if he ordered the words *Allahu-Akbar*[2] to be engraved on the Imperial seals and coins. Most said that the people would like it very much. Hajji Ibrahim Sihrindi objected, and said that the phrase was ambiguous, and that the Emperor might substitute a verse from the Qur'an *La Zikrullahi Akbaru*,[3] which he alleged to be incapable of bearing a second meaning. But the Emperor, much displeased, said that it was surely well known that a humble creature with his own sense of profound humility could scarcely claim Divinity; he merely looked to the propriety of the words;[1] how could his meaning be distorted?"[2]

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 208-10; Lowe, pp. 211-13.

[2] "Allah is great"; *Akbar* being the superlative of the word *kabir*, "great", and a title of God. The phrase could be interpreted as "Akbar is Allah." Beveridge says, "The conversation is, on the whole, creditable both to Akbar and Hajji Ibrahim. Akbar, I think, admitted that he chose the phrase on account of its consonance with his name but denied that he had any intention of claiming to be God. Probably Hajji Ibrahim's well-meant suggestion would not have mended matters, for people would still have remarked on the double significance on the words." (Bev, I, p. 2, note 1).

[3] To commemorate God is the greatest thing.

Hajji Ibrahim tried to regain the Emperor's favour by legalising the use of red and yellow clothes, which Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi had earlier suppressed very strictly.[3] He produced a tradition in support of them and issued many *fatwas*, as we shall see,[4] to please the Emperor but they produced no tangible result.

Abu'l Fazl played a vital role in the debates. He mobilised the support of all those scholars and nobles whom Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi had alienated. Many scholars who had been his father's pupils supported him. He so directed the discussions that the position of the Court 'ulama became awkward, and by manipulating the opportunities that arose, he skilfully managed to turn the tables on them. Since there was no love lost between them; Abu'l Fazl did not find it difficult to bring them into open conflict with one another. The 'ulama relied upon authorities, some of whom were antiquated and apocryphal, but their opponents examined the propositions in their historical and logical settings and the narrow interpretations of the 'ulama were invariably rejected. Moreover, their knowledge of Arabic, particularly Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi's, was very poor.[5] They could not surpass Abu'l Fazl, who had obtained a very strong and systematic grounding in Arabic philology and literature. The traditional Arabic phrases, which the 'ulama used to quote to support their arguments, could now help them no more. Abu'l Fazl attacked ancient prejudices and dogmas without committing himself to any particular belief of his own. The matrix of his mind was different; he analysed every problem objectively and systematically, a procedure not familiar to the 'ulama. Badauni has almost hit the mark by quoting the following saying about Abu'l Fazl's approach: "A man who continually takes the offensive does not commit himself to his own true opinions."[1]

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[1] Meaning thereby relationship with his name.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 210; Lowe, p. 213.

[3] *Ma'asiru'l Umara*, II, p. 561. According to Farid Bhakkari, saffron was merely sprinkled upon Akbar's clothes and Akbar afterwards, complained to Faizi and Abu'l Fazl. They suggested that the Shaikh should be invited to dinner and dishes dressed with saffron be served. When they had finished, Abu'l Faz'l asked them why, if saffron were lawful, why did 'Abdu'n Nabi reprimand the Emperor; if it were unlawful, why did they eat it, for the effect of food lasts in the body for three days. Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi instantly struck him with his stick; but this crude act became instrumental to the progress of both the brothers. They began to harass Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and Makhdumu'l Mulk with awkward questions. (*Zakhiralu'l Khawanin*, I, pp. 70-77). This anecdote like that in *Ma'asiru'l Umara* is apoocryphal, and seem to have been invented to demonstrate a contrast between Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi's highhandedness and Akbar's humility.

[4] *MT*, II, pp. 210-11.

[5] According to Badauni, Mirza Aziz Koka reminded Akbar that Shaikh Abdu'n Nabi pronounced ***hazam*** (the prudent course) as *Kharam*. (*MT*, II, p. 204).

His previous life as a scholar did not afford his opponents any opportunity to find fault with his morals, as the 'ulama did with one another. It seems that the only point on which the 'ulama could defame Abu'l Fazl was the allegation that his grandmother was a slave girl. When Shaikh Mubarak came to know of it, he wrote a long letter to Faizi defending the purity of his lineage.[2] It became the basis of Abu'l Fazl's autobiographical note at the conclusion of the *A'in i-Akbari*. The Shaikh denounced all those who traded on the names of their forefathers and were themselves devoid of personal qualities and achievements. He made the following verse of Mulla Jami (1414-92) the mainstay of his arguments:

Jami! serve God through love, heed not lineage,
For this road to God recognises no son of this one or that one.

Then he gave a long account of his ancestry and details about his mother. After expressing satisfaction over Abu'l Fazl's achievement in the discussions, he urged Faizi to ask his brother to exercise self-restraint lest the dominant 'ulama harm him.[3] However, Abu'l Fazl had assessed the situation correctly and he played his cards resolutely and with confidence.

In July 1575 Hakim Abu'l Fath,[4] Hakim Humam[5] and

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 198.

[2] Shaikh Mubarak's letter to Faizi. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] According to Badauni, the Hakim used to criticize all the eminent Persian poets of past, he called Anwari (*c.* 1126-89) Anwariak (the flatterer and about Khaqani (1121-99) he used to say, "If he were now living he would be much improved, for whenever he came to my house I would box his ears for him, to arouse him from his sleepiness, and when he went hence to Shaikh Abu'l Fazl's house he also would box his ears, and between us we should improve his poetry." (*MT*, III, p. 167; Haig, pp. 233-34).

[5] His real name was Hakim Humayun but when he entered Akbar's

Hakim Nuru'd Din,[1] the sons of Maulana 'Abdu'r Razzaq Gilani, came to the Court. Their father had been tortured to death in 1566-67 by Shah Tahmasp Safavi (1524-76), who occupied Gilan and who obviously suspected him of being a Sunni. Hakim Abu'l Fath, was a man of tact and pleasing manners. Gradually he came to exercise considerable influence over Akbar and became an intimate friend of Abu'l Fazl.

Before long the debates were opened to Shi'is as well. The scope of the discussions widened. To the displeasure of the orthodox, topics like the place of 'A'isha,[2] the daughter of Abu Bakr (632-34), among the wives of the Prophet, the superiority of 'Ali (656-61) over the first three Caliphs[3] and the question of his rightful succession; Abu Bakr's rejection of the right of Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, to own an oasis named Fadak;[4] the nature of the rule of the Caliphs; the unreliability of the works of the Sunni traditionists including Bukhari;[5] and

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court he called himself Humayun Quli (slave of Humayun). Akbar gave him the name of Humam (hero or magnanimous prince) (*MT*, III, p. 168; Haig, p. 234).

[1] He was a poet and wrote under the name of Qarari.

[2] 'A'isha, the daughter of the first Caliph Abu Bakr was married to Muhammad in 623 or 624 at the age of about ten, and is known to have been exceedingly beautiful. When Muhammad died, she was a childless widow of 18 and being a wife of the Prophet was not allowed to remarry. After 'Usman's assassination in 656, she fought against 'Ali to avenge 'Usmans murder. She was present at the battle, fought in December 656 and known as the battle of the camel. Her forces were defeated and she retired into seclusion, dying in 678.

[3] The Shi'is and the Tafziliya Sunnis believed 'Ali to be superior to the other three Caliphs.

[4] Fadak is an ancient town in the northern Hijaz, near Khaibar. "Fatima maintained that Fadak, like Muhammad's share of the produce from Khaybar, should come to her as her father's heiress; Abu Bakr, on the other hand, maintained that their attribution should remain exactly as Muhammad had settled it, since it was a question of *sadaqas* (that is to say public property used for benevolent purposes, like the *zakat*)." The Shi'is consider Abu Bakr unjustified in disputing the claims of Fatima (*EI*, new I, pp. 725-26, 844).

[5] Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari (810-70), the celebrated author of the *Sahih*, completed the work after sixteen years of labour. He is regarded by the Sunnis as the most outstanding traditionist. "The work in the main is arranged according to the various matters of *fiqh*, but it also contains other material, such as the beginning of creation, on paradise and hell, on different prophets and, in greater detail, on Muhammad, on Qur'an,

the controversial points of law as codified by the four jurists,[1] aroused the curiosity of the Emperor. The Shi'is raked up some of the controversies which had been earlier raised in the 'Ibadat Khana. Mulla Muhammad Yazdi, whom Badauni called Yazidi,[2] was most vocal and frank in putting forward his views. However, the uncompromising attitude of the Shi'is convinced the Emperor that they were as narrow minded and fanatical as the Sunni 'ulama. Badauni says:

> "The discussion passed beyond the scope of the controversies of the Sunnis and Shi'is, Hanafis and Shafi'is, and lawyers and philosophers; they attacked the very basis of the faith."[3]

The debates were as bewildering to the Emperor as they were appalling to the 'ulama. Differences over the interpretation of the works of *hadis*, seems to have made him turn to the Qur'an for guidance. Qazi Jalalu'd Din and other 'ulama were required to explain to him the meaning of various verses. This too failed, because a further puzzling difference of opinion was evident among the interpreters of the verses. Akbar is said to have observed:

> "It is strange that no commentaries on the Qur'an were made in the time of our Prophet so that differences of interpretations might not have arisen afterwards."[4]

Early in 1576, preparations for a military expedition against Maharana Pratap precluded the Emperor from attending exclusively to religious discussions. In March 1576 he paid a visit to Ajmer, and in July 1576 he set off from Fathpur towards the Eastern provinces, but news of the success of the Imperial army in Bengal brought him back to the capital when he had completed the first stage of his journey. In September 1576, he marched to Ajmer, where Man Singh visited him and explained the circumstances of Maharana Pratap's escape from the carnage at Haldighati.[5]

commentary etc." [*EI*, new I, pp. 1295-96].

[1] See *Supra*.

[2] Follower of Yazid bin Mu'awiya (680-83).

[3] *MT*, II, p. 255.

[4] *A'in*, III, p. 185, saying no. 132; Jarrett, III, p. 438.

[5] *AN*, III, pp. 175-77, 185-86.

About this time, the return of some *darweshes* from Mecca put thoughts of going on pilgrimage in the Emperor's mind; but his favourites restrained him from undertaking the adventurous trip. He appointed Sultan Khwaja Naqshbandi as Amir i-Hajj (the leader of the pilgrims) and gave him six lakhs of rupees and 12000 robes for distribution among the poor and the recluses of Mecca. Sultan Khwaja was required to prepare a list of the saints of the holy places so that they might be made the objects of the Emperor's largesse.[1]

In Rajab 985/September 1577, he again set off for Ajmer, and the next month Mir Abu Turab Wali[2] was appointed as Amir i-Hajj and given five lakhs of rupees and 10,000 robes for distribution to the needy people of Mecca and Medina. A general order was issued that anyone could go on the pilgrimage at state expense, and a large number of people accompanied Mir Abu Turab. One lakh of rupees in cash and exceedingly valuable gifts were sent to the Sherifs of Mecca.[3]

On 22 April 1578, the Emperor decided to organise a *qamargha*[4] hunt in the neighbourhood of Bhira. He crossed the Jhelum and beasts were driven in from a radius of about fifty miles. 'Arif Qandahari says:

> "Early in Rabi'I 986/second week of May 1578, in the course of his hunt he obtained heavenly inspiration and heard divine messages relating to certain affairs. Accordingly he shortened the hair of his head. Most of his favourites followed him in this practice. They voluntarily gave up certain practices and directed their attention to the essence of the things."[5]

Nizamu'd Din Ahmad says:

> "That manifestation of the intrinsic and extrinsic lustre and compendium of partial and total perfection (Akbar), attained to an indescribable mystic ecstasy. People circulated all sorts of rumours about it. Some people thought that the chosen of

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 192. [2] See *Supra*.

[3] *AN*, III, p. 217; *MT*, II, p. 251. On this occasion Badauni sought Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi's permission to go on pilgrimage but was told that unless he obtained permission from his old mother he could not go. Badauni's mother withheld her leave, and his proposed visit did not take place.

[4] The hunting-ring formed to enclose the game in the grand royal chase.

[5] 'Arif, pp. 235-36.

> the Almighty (Akbar) had found the company of invisible spirits. Another group thought that the silent ones of the wilderness (animals) had conveyed some subtle message through the speechless tongues. The hunt was given up; and charity was dispensed on a large scale to the poor."[1]

Under the tree where he had experienced his ecstasy, a building was erected; and a garden was planted to commemmorate the event.[2] Abu'l Fazl, in a rhetorical account of the event, mentions that all the trapped animals were set free. The Emperor was seized with an intense desire to retire into asceticism, but "in obedience to the dictates of wisdom," he confined himself to creating some sort of harmony between his outward appearance and that of other ascetics. He shortened his beautiful long hair. "Stranger still, some time before this he had said that in the beginning of his reign he had, out of sympathy with the natives of India, and contrary to the custom of his ancestors, cherished the hair of his head, but from the wonders of Divine power would it be surprising if he should change his mind, and bring some inhabitants of this country to his custom?"[3]

Strangely enough, Badauni did not make any adverse comment upon the Emperor's mystical trance. However he does mention that the news was disturbing to his subject in the eastern provinces but that everything calmed down in a short time. The Emperor's mother rushed to her son to find what had happened.[4] No worldly motive can be assigned to this extraordinary mystical experience which one of our earliest authorities on Akbar's reign so vividly describes. Akbar had had earlier fits of mystical experiences, and the present one seems to have been used by his favourites to bring home to his mind that the Divine grace bestowed upon him demanded that he should adopt a more humane attitude towards all living beings, whether animals or mankind.

Hindus Invited to Religious Debates

From Bhira, the Emperor paid a visit to Ajmer whence he returned to Fathpur. From September 1578 the debates were resumed in earnest, and their scope was greatly widened. Ultimately sufis, Muslim philosophers, jurists, Sunnis, Shi'is, brahmans, Yatis,[1] Siuras,[2] Charvaka,[3] Christians, Jews, Sabaeans, and Zoroastrians began to participate in the discussions. It seems that the Emperor's frequent visits to Ajmer and his journey through Rajasthan between 1576 and 1578, aroused his interest in the Hindus and Jaina sages afresh. Though they had not participated in the earlier discussions in the 'Ibadat Khana, Akbar was intimately acquainted with the philosophy of Hinduism and Jainism. As early as 1575 Raja Deb Chand had suggested that "Allah after all must have great respect for cows, or the cow would not have been mentioned in the first chapter of the Qur'an."[4]

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[1] *Tabaqat*, II, p.338.
[2] *MT*, II, pp. 253-54.
[3] *AN*, III, pp. 241-42; Bev, III, pp. 347-48.
[4] *Tabaqat*, II, p. 338.

Abu'l Fazl has given a list of the learned men of his times in the *A'in i-Akbari.* The list classifies the names of the learned men into four categories. Twenty-one persons are listed under the heading "People who understood the mysteries of both worlds." It contains the names of twelve Muslims, including Shaikh Mubarak, and nine Hindus. The names of the Hindus, though corrupted by copyists ignorant of Sanskrit, are as follows:

Madhu Saraswati
Narain Asram
Damudar Bhatt
Narsingha
Aditya
Madhusudhan
Hariji Sur (Hirrijaya Suri)
Rama Tirth
Rama Indra

In the list of the "People who understood the mysteries of the heart," there are fifteen names, of which Rama Bhadra and (Gosa'in) Jadrup are Hindus. The lists of experts in philosophy contains twenty-two names. The following are Hindus:

Nara'in
Sri Bhatt
Rama Krishna
Basudeva Misr
Vidyaniwas
Gopinath
Madhu Bhat
Bishn Nath
Balbhadra Misr
Baman Bhatt
Gori Nath
Kishan Pandit

[1] Jain ascetics.
[2] A general name for the Jains.
[3] The materialistic philosophers and sceptics among the Hindus.
[4] *MT*, II, p. 250.

Bhattacharj	Bhagirath Bhattacharja
Kashinath Bhattacharj	

He has given a long list of forty "persons who understood sciences based on testimony (*manqul*)." This contains the names of all the important 'alims including Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, Shaikh 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni and Madhdumu'l Mulk. It also contains two Hindu names: Bijai Sen Sur and Bhan Chandra.[1]

It seems that these Hindus were admitted to Akbar's favour between 1576-77 and 1595-96. On the basis of the available material it is not possible to determine exactly how many of the Hindus had been admitted to the Court by 1578.

Badauni has mentioned the names of two brahmans who, according to him, exercised considerable influence over the Emperor. One was Purkhotam (Purushottam) with whom Akbar held private interviews and asked to translate the Sanskrit and Hindi Divine names into Persian.[2] Dewi Brahman, one of the translators of *Mahabharata*, Badauni says, was once pulled up the wall of the palace, sitting on a *charpa'i* (cot), till he was near the Emperor's bed chamber (khwabgah). "Whilst thus suspended he instructed the Emperor in the legends and the secrets of Hinduism, in the manner of worshipping idols, the fire, the sun and stars, and of revering the chief gods of these unbelievers, such as Brahma, Mahadeva, Bishnu, Krishna, Ram and Mahama'i. Of all the principles of the Hindu beliefs, the doctrine of transmigration of the soul stimulated the special interest of Akbar.[3]

Apparently yogis were not invited to join the discussions in the 'Ibadat Khana, which began early in 1575; but in the later 1570's they were often the Emperor's guests in his private apartments at Fathpur. When he finally left there in 1585, he did not cease to receive them thus.

The Parsees at Akbar's Court

In January-February 1573, when besieging Surat, Akbar had come in contact with the Zoroastrian priest Dastur Mihrji Rana, who had come up from Navsari, 18 miles south, to see him. In 1578 he and a select part of mobeds (Zoroastrian priest) visited the Court in response to the Emperor's invitation, and participated in the discussions in the 'Ibadat Khana. Abu'l Fazl, whose interest in the Ishraqi wisdom had long made him eager to sit at the feet of learned Zoroastrian sages, found a golden opportunity to satisfy his curiosity. The Hindu *havana* (Fire Sacrifice) was already performed within the female apartments of the imperial palace and Akbar was profoundly influenced by the sun and fire worship of the Hindus, particularly by the practices of the Rajputs.[1] His favourite Bir Bal was an ardent sun worshipper. The *Ishraqi*[2] wisdom and the sufic interpretations of *nur* (light)[3] offered by Abu'l Fazl and his Irani associates brought Akbar's veneration for light to the verge of worship.

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[1] *A'in*, I, pp. 166-67; Blochmann, pp. 606-11.

[2] *AT*, II, p. 257.

[3] *MT*, II, pp. 257-58; Lowe, p. 265.

The presence of Zoroastrian priests stimulated his interest in the fire worship of the ancient Iranian Emperors, in whose temples blazed perpetual fire. Abu'l Fazl was ordered to keep a fire burning continually in the palace, as the Emperor had now convinced himself that fire was one of the signs of the Almighty.[4]

The mobeds stimulated considerable interest in the discussions by introducing Zoroastrian theories of the struggle between good and evil. These topics had earlier engaged the attention of Muslim philosophers and some harmony with the approach of the Zoroastrians, already existed among the sufis. They also aroused interest in the old Iranian language known as Pahlawi and Abu'l Fazl seems to have learnt it. Azar Kaiwan, a distinguished Zoroastrian was also invited from Iran. He did not visit India in person but sent to the Emperor one of his works, which highly impressed Abu'l Fazl.[1] Subsequently Dastur Ardashir another Zoroastrian, was invited to help in the compilation of an authoritative lexicon, comprising old Persian, Dari and Pahlawi words.[2] However, the project could not be completed at the scale at which it was planned.[3]

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 261.

[2] See *Supra*.

[3] The sufi interpretation of the following verse of the *Qur'an* greatly emphasises the importance of light:

> "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. A likeness of His Light is as a pillar on which is a lamp—the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as it were a brightly shining star—lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof gives light, though fire touch it not—light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He pleases. And Allah sets forth parables for men, and Allah is Knower of all doings."—(Ch. 24, 35) Ghazali wrote a commentary upon the above verse in a book entitled *Mishkat al-Anwar*, English translation by W. H. T. Gardner, (Lahore, 1952, reprint).

[4] *MT*, II, pp. 260-61.

The Christians at Akbar's Court

At the beginning of the siege of Surat, late in February 1573, Akbar had made his earliest contact with the Portuguese in very mysterious circumstances. Commenting upon Abu'l Fazl's account in the *Akbar Nama*, Beveridge says:

> "Probably what occurred was that the Portuguese Viceroy and his fleet came to Daman in order to see what could be made out of the troubles in Gujarat. As in former days they came to Diu to help Bahadur and ended by getting possession of the fort, so this time the Viceroy may have hoped to make a similar stroke by coming to Surat to help the Mirzas and then getting possession of the fort. So he came to Daman with his fleet, presumably after an invitation from the Mirzas, and then when he found that Akbar was too strong, he changed his plan and sent an embassy to Surat to Akbar."[4]

Its leader was Antony Cabral. Akbar displayed a keen interest in the mission and made "enquiries about the wonders of Portugal and the manner and customs of Europe."[5]

In 1577, one Pedro Tavares, the commander of Satgaon (Chittagong) in Bengal, visited Akbar's court. On his recommendation, Akbar invited a priest named Julian Pereira from Satgaon who arrived at Fathpur in March 1578 and took part in the religious discussions there.[6] He aroused Akbar's interest in Christianity and, at the Emperor's invitation, the Viceroy of Goa sent the first Jesuit mission to the Court of Akbar under the leadership of Rudolph Acquaviva, an Italian, twenty-nine years old, of "high social status and of outstanding sanctity." The two other members were Antony Monserrate, a Spaniard, forty-three years of age, and Francis Henriquez, a native of Ormuz, who had been converted from Islam, and who acted as interpreter. They left Goa on 17 November 1579 and reached Fathpur on 27 or 28 February, 1580.

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[1] *Dabistan, i-Mazahib*, p. 326. [2] *Ibid*, p. 325.

[3] *Farhang i-Jahangiri* was begun in 1591-92 but completed modestly in Jahangir's reign (*Farhang i-Jahangiri*, Lucknow, n.d.), I p. 4.

[4] Bev, III, p. 37 note 1. [5] *AN*, III, p. 37.

[6] Sir Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (London, 1932), pp. 23-24.

Edward Maclagan, after studying contemporary and later records relating to the Mission says:

> ". . . . it may be inferred that the ultimate object of the Mission was the conversion to Christianity of the inhabitants of Mogor. But in view of the unsolicited invitation addressed to Goa and the known proclivities of Akbar, it was ardently hoped that this object might be achieved through the medium of the conversion of the King. All the efforts of the Mission were therefore at first concentrated on the King himself. Royal converts were not unknown in the Indies; the King of the Maldives, for instance, and more than one King of Ceylon had become Christians, and a near relation of the King of Bijapur had been baptized at Goa shortly after Father Rudolf's arrival from Europe."[1]

On the other hand, intellectual curiosity and spiritual restlessness motivated Akbar to explore the different religious systems seriously and deeply. Monserrate has himself recorded the following speech of Akbar:

> "I perceive that there are varying customs and beliefs of varying religious paths. For the teachings of the Hindus, the Mussalmans, the Jazdini (Parsis), the Jews and the Christians are all different. But the followers of each religion regard the institution of their own religion as better than those of any other. Not only so, but they strive to convert the rest to their own way of belief. If these refuse to be converted, they not only despise them, but also regard them for this very reason as their enemies. And this caused me to feel many serious doubts and scruples. Wherefore I desire that on

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 27.

> appointed days the books of all the religious laws be brought forward, and the doctors meet together and hold discussions, so that I may hear them, and that each one may determine which is the truest and mightiest religion."[1]

While these were without doubt the reasons which impelled Akbar to institute religious discussions, the spirit of free enquiry which he encouraged was quite contrary to the interests of the Fathers, whose great hope was that Akbar would submit to the Catholic church.

After their arrival, the Fathers were advised to consult Abu'l Fazl about their difficulties and "confide their troubles to him as they would to (the Emperor) himself."[2] They soon found that their interpreter had neither the wit nor the learning to cope with the questions of theology which they so much wished to discuss, and that nobody in the Court could speak any European languages, not even Greek. The Emperor ordered Abu'l Fazl to teach Persian to Rudolf Acquaviva who made quick progress.[3]

In Abu'l Fazl and his father, the members of the Mission found patient and sincere listeners. Shaikh Mubarak's "wisdom, authority, and friendliness to Christianity" was as astonishing to them as the devotion with which he kissed the Gospels. He extolled the learning and piety of the Fathers, and appeared impressed by their general behaviour.[4] Abu'l Fazl frequently supported the Fathers against the 'ulama in discussion. This enhanced their confidence in him, and they began to consult him before each discussion, so that they might govern their demeanour by his advice and give the gathering as little offence as possible. In one of the discussions they found his attitude so close to their own, that they could not help thinking him a Christian. He, like the Emperor, appeared deeply moved whenever he entered the little chapel of the Fathers.[1]

The Fathers assiduously tried to prove "that the Gospel, having been foretold in the Old Testament, must be superior to the Qur'an which was not" and "that as Muhammad had acknowledged the divine origin of the Gospel, he was inconsistent in refusing to acknowledge the divinity of Christ."[1] Topics like the character of Muhammad's heaven, the outside witness to Christ's divinity, the mystery of the Incarnation and the twofold nature of Christ, and the inconsistency of Islam in its varying attitude towards the character of Christ's death, the allegation that Christians had tampered with the text of the Bible, and the doctrines of the Trinity aroused much heated discussion.[2] In fact, the priests could not present logical arguments to explain the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, which the Catholic Church regards as "mysteries of faith," incapable of human proof. They mistook the cordiality and sympathy of Akbar towards Christianity, hoped that he had received the Lord's grace, and waited in vain for his conversion. Religious inquisitiveness was hardly encouraged by the atmosphere of resurgent counter-reformation after the Council of Trent, and the liberty which Akbar allowed for discussion of any religious belief seemed to them subversive of all authority. Although Father Rudolf had studied the Qur'an in a Latin translation, he found himself unable to bear a situation in which the name of Muhammad was frequently mentioned and Christ Jesus was not addressed as "Son of God," but only as a prophet.[3]

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[1] Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate* (English translation by J. S. Hoyland and S. N. Banerjee (Oxford, 1922), p. 182.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 54-55. [3] *Ibid*, pp. 49-50. [4] *Ibid*, pp. 54-55.

[5] *Ibid*, pp. 55-56, 58.

On several occasions ordeal by fire was proposed as a means of proving the veracity of the claims of the Muslims and the Christians. The available accounts on the subject are divergent and contradictory. Abu'l Fazl says:

> "The Padre (Rudolph) quietly and with an air of conviction said, 'Alas, that such things should be thought to be true! In fact, if this faction have such an opinion of our Book, and regard the *Furqan* (Qur'an) as the pure word of God, it is proper that a heaped fire be lighted. We shall take the Gospels in our hands, and the 'ulama of that faith shall take their book, and together we shall enter that testing place of truth. The escape of anyone will be a sign of the truth of his faith."[4]

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[1] *Ibid*, pp. 39, 50-51, 130-31. [2] *Ibid*, pp. 38-39. [3] *Ibid*, p. 51.
[4] *AN*, III, pp. 254-55; Bev, III, p. 369.

According to Abu'l Fazl the "liverless and black-hearted fellows (the 'ulama)" wavered;[1] but Badauni and the Jesuit accounts corroborate each other and differ from Abu'l Fazl. Badauni says:

> "At this time the Emperor sent Shaikh Jamal Bakhtiyar, to fetch Shaikh Qutbu'd Din of Jalesar, who was a *majzub*[2] and intoxicated (with the love of God). When Qutbu'd Din came, the Emperor brought him to a dialogue with some Christian priests, and some of the philosophers and *mujtahids* of the age. After some discussion the Shaikh urged, 'Let us make a pit of fire, and pass through in the presence of His Majesty. Whoever emerges unharmed, will prove thereby the truth of his religion.' "

The fire was made, the Shaikh pulled one of the Christian priests by the coat and said to him, "Come on, in the name of God!" But none of the priests accepted the challenge.[3] According to Peruschi, Akbar twice or thrice proposed the ordeal by fire, but Father Rudolf declined "to tempt God." Monserrate says that a similar test was suggested by Father Pereira before the Jesuits arrived and was several times later on proposed by Muslims to the Jesuits. It was suggested by the Muslims to Father Rudolf and was declined by him, although the King supported the proposal.[4]

The accounts are not wholly irreconcilable; for it is clear that the fire ordeal was proposed on several occasions. Abu'l Fazl has mentioned it in his account of the 23rd year (March 1578-79); but the first Jesuit mission only reached Fathpur at the end of February 1580. It seems that Abu'l Fazl wrote Rudolf in place of Pereira; such a mistake in transcribing a foreign name is quite understandable. Rudolf invariably opposed such an ordeal, whether proposed by a *majzub* or Akbar.[5] In fact Akbar loved such spectacles and a *majzub* could hardly restrain himself from throwing out such challenges.

On 8 February 1581, Akbar set off to the Punjab and Kabul at the head of an expedition against his rebellious brother

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 255.

[2] Attracted by Divine grace and renouncing all worldly concerns.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 299.

[4] *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p. 31.

Mirza Muhammad Hakim. Father Monserrate was commanded to accompany him. Though full-fledged religious discussions were not possible on the march, Akbar sometimes invited the representatives of various faiths to join a select gathering of his favourites. On several occasions he invited Father Monserrate and exhibited curiosity about such matters as the location of Portugal on a map.[1] In a hot discussion which Monserrate held during a halt on the banks of Indus, the Emperor asked, "Are the Law and the Gospel different books?" Monserrate replied, "They are indeed different books and written in different times; but they contain no statement mutually inconsistent or contradictory. The Law and the Gospel give food to the soul of a man. The Law is suited to infancy and the Gospel to maturity. The only difference lies in the manner of preparing and seasoning the food." Abu'l Fazl thereupon shocked the Father by retorting that the Qur'an also supplied spiritual food.[2] According to the Father, occasions were not wanting when both Akbar and Abu'l Fazl "showed no lack of faith whatever in Islam."[3] Abu'l Fazl's remarks about the Qur'an reflect his attitude of respect towards all scriptures believed to be divinely inspired.

Another incident recorded by Monserrate further illustrates the attitude of Akbar towards the different religious systems of the world and Monserrate's own uncompromising nature. In August, 1581, when Akbar on his way back to his capital, stayed at Peshawar, Jalalu'd Din (Jalala of the Mughal historians), the son of Bayazid Rawshana'i, was brought to him with a band of four hundred followers. Monserrate says:

> "The King received them graciously and promised them freedom to follow their religion and customs, and to obey and reverence the son of their prophet (as they called him). He held that if he granted them this religious freedom they would remain constantly in their own districts."

Monserrate lamented that Akbar "cared little that in allowing everyone to follow his own religion he was in reality violating all."[4] The gulf between the Fathers and Akbar was as wide as the chasm that opened between the Emperor and the 'ulama.

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[1] *The Commentary*, pp. 40-43.
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 100-01, 118-21, 126-34, 136-38.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 132-33. [4] *Ibid*, p. 179.

The Jaina

Jainism left an indelible impression on Akbar's mind. As early as 1568 Buddhi Sagar of Tapa-gacha is seen disputing with another Jaina saint in Akbar's presence.[1] Swetambara Jainas and other Jaina hermits participated in religious discussions when they were thrown open to the members of other religions. Early in 1582 Akbar extended an invitation to Hirvijaya Suri, then the outstanding scholar and saint of the Swetambara sect in Gujarat.[2] On June 1583, he arrived at Fathpur with sixty-seven monks. He was asked to stay with Abu'l Fazl until Akbar was free to pay attention to his conversation.[3] He had already obtained considerable celebrity because of his commentary on *Jambudvipaprajnapti*[4] and highly impressed Abu'l Fazl with his learning and saintly life. He stayed at Akbar's court for two years, and was awarded the title of *Jagat Guru*, or the World Teacher.[5] In Abu'l Fazl's list of scholars, Hariji Sur, mentioned among those who understood the mysteries of both worlds, was none other than this celebrated Jaina sage.

After his departure in 1585, he left a Jaina sage named Shanti Chandra at Akbar's court. In 1587 Hirvijaya sent another distinguished Jaina scholar, Bhanu Chandra to Akbar's court at Lahore, who lived there until 1592. Abu'l Fazl had included Hirvijaya in the list of scholars "who understood the mysteries of *manqul*[6] like the Muslim theologians. It seems that Abu'l Fazl studied under him a treatise entitled *Saddarshan Samuccaya* which expounded the systems of Ancient Indian philosophy.[8] Abu'l Fazl regarded the success achieved by Akbar in attracting both the Jainas and the Brahmans to his Court, as a great achievement in its own right. He says:

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 142.

[2] A. L. Srivastava, *Akbar the Great* (Agra, 1962), I, p. 263.

[3] Kalipada Mitra, Jain Influence at the Mughal Court, *Proceedings of Indian History Congress, Calcutta*, 1939, p. 1062.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 1062-63. [5] *Ibid*, p. 1061. [6] *Ibid*, p. 1062.

[7] *A'in*, I, p. 167.

[8] *A'in*, III, p. 75-87; Jarrett, III, pp. 198-222; R. Krishnamurti, *Akbar* (Baroda, 1961), pp. 73-88.

> "The Brahmans worship Krishna as a deity, while the Jainas relegate him to service in hell. The Brahmans deem it better to face a raging elephant or a ravening lion than to meet with one of this sect. His Majesty, however, in his earnest search after truth, has particularly dispelled the darkness of age by the light of universal toleration, and the numerous sectaries, relinquishing their mutual aversion, live in the happy accomplishment of a common harmony."[1]

Abu'l Fazl and Contemporary Religious Tensions

From his entry to the Court until 1579, Abu'l Fazl suffered great trial and tribulation. It was no easy task to dislodge the 'ulama from their entrenched positon, and Shaikh Mubarak trembled for his son's future. Abu'l Fazl sums up the state of affairs in the conclusion of the first volume of the *Akbar Nama*:

> "For some time a struggle for the (supremacy of) reason took place in the glorious assembly of the world's lord. There was a new daily market for the investigation of ideas, and the examination of evidences. Because of the ignorance of scientific principles, and lack of real knowledge, the praters of the day, who, on account of their humbug and glib tongues, were looked upon as men of much enlightenment, fell into difficulty. Sometimes they practised trickery by keeping silent, by elevating their eyebrows and by turning up their eyes, and sometimes they replied by speaking in enigmas and by talking nonsense. By heaven's favour they were thus brought to a position where their base-metal talisman broke into pieces. They were obliged to give up that plan, and to have recourse to absurdity. They urged that reason violated faith and that it misled some simple-minded descendants of the Turks. Relying on the help of these ignorant and foolish persons, they stooped down to acting in a high-handed manner. The assistance of a happy star and an open brow enabled me to bring them down from that high ground, and they proceeded to cavil in the discussion of minute points of *manqul* (traditional theology). The tactics of this group were to set up false principles and introduce worthless arguments. There were long discussions about creeds and sects, and they

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 87; Jarrett, III, p. 222.

represented the critical examination of doubtful points as the laying of pitfalls in the way of the articles of faith, and inveighed against it. Some behaved badly on receiving these hypocritical warnings. Old companions and friends of long standing plucked up the skirts of association, so that I was surrounded by a wall of exclusion in my own city. Sometimes I uttered songs of joy at this solitude in the midst of society. I knew it was the result of right-thinking and so I increased my supplication to God. Sometimes from human weakness and feebleness of capacity I murmured to myself, 'I spread the carpet of right-thinking and well-being towards men, and I strive against myself, and spoil my own play. Why are men in ambush against me?' "[1]

Although the 'ulama even tried to misuse their position of authority, Abu'l Fazl's steady battle against them cut the ground beneath their feet. They were unable to challenge even his interpretations of traditional theology. According to Badauni, Abu'l Fazl by dint of his own exertions, the help of his father and the patronage of the Emperor "cast them all in a short space of time to the ground of scorn and contempt." None but Hakim Abu'l Fath and Mulla Muhammad Yazdi could keep pace with him in any of the discussions; Badauni himself retired in disgust.[2]

Effects of Religious Discussions

The first phase of the discussions in the 'Ibadat Khana exposed the ignorance of the 'ulama, in whom Akbar had reposed great confidence, and shewed their inability to understand the day-to-day needs of the country. The interpretation of the law, the *hadis* and the Qur'anic commentaries continued to be more challenging for Akbar; but the extent of differences between the sects soon appeared to him as a rank jungle of confusion. On the whole, the results of the discussions were ruinous to those who clung to the antiquated interpretations of Islamic theology.

The second round of the discussions produced a more positive result, and its effects were permanent. According to Badauni, the Emperor was convinced that:

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[1] *AN*, II, p. 389; Bev, II, pp. 568-69.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 211; Lowe, p. 214.

> "... there are wise men to be found ready at hand in all religions, and men of asceticism and recipients of revelation and workers of miracles among all nations. Truth is the inhabitant of every place; and how could it be right to consider it as necessarily confined to one religion or creed, especially to one which had only recently made its appearance and has not yet endured a thousand years? And why assert one thing and deny another, and claim pre-eminence for things which are not essentially pre-eminent?"[1]

Indeed, the discussions in the 'Ibadat Khana revolutionised Akbar's thinking. Formerly he believed that "the outward show" was the essence of the faith and that "internal conviction" was not needed. He forcibly converted Hindus to Islam. The debates convinced him that "not a single step should be taken without strong reason." The only profitable creed was one that the wisdom approved. Repeating of the *Kalima*, or circumcision under compulsion, was no religion. It was essential that everyone should rise up and fight against the "presumptuous carnal soul" and control "his lust and anger." What was needed was a constant self-examination. "We blame ourselves" he said, "for what we did in accordance with the old rules, before the truth about faith had shed its rays upon our heart."[2]

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 256; Lowe, p. 264.

[2] See *Infra*, Chapter 10; *AN*, III, p. 255; Bev, III, pp. 369-70.

CHAPTER 4

THE END OF THE OLD ORDER

(*The Mahzar*)

In spite of their repeated defeats in the debates in the 'Ibadat Khana, the 'ulama remained unaware of the need to abandon their personal rivalries and mutual dissensions. By exposing each other's faults, they themselves destroyed their own reputation and made the task of their enemies easier.

Badauni deals with the fall of Shaikh and 'Abdu'n Nabi at considerable length. He tells how the whole affair started in May 1577 when Akbar arrived at Fathpur-Sikri from Rajputana. Qazi 'Abdu'r Rahim, the *qazi* of Mathura, complained to Shaikh Abdu'n Nabi about the high-handedness of a rich brahman who had snatched all the material collected by him for the erection of a mosque and had used it for building a temple. When he was stopped doing this he abused the Prophet Muhammad in the presence of witnesses, and exhibited bitter contempt for Islam. Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi sent for the brahman who ignored his summons. Thereupon the Emperor appointed a commission of enquiry consisting of, Shaikh Abu'l Fazl and Bir Bal; they brought the brahman to the Court and Abu'l Fazl confirmed that the allegations were true.

The 'ulama soon became divided on the nature of the punishment that the brahman deserved according to the *shari'a*. Some of them suggested that he should be put to death, others that he should be heavily fined and paraded on an ass.

The controversy became prolonged. Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi pressed the Emperor to sanction the execution of the brahman. According to Mughal practice the final orders for capital punishment were given by the Emperor. Akbar avoided giving a clear order in the expectation that Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi would take a more reasonable view of the case. All he said was that punishment for offences against the *shari'a* was to be meted out by the 'ulama, why should the matter be referred to him? Such an answer implied that he was not in fovour of capital punishment, however. He set out for the Punjab without any clear decision having been made, the brahman meanwhile remaining in prison. When he was on his way back to Fathpur early in 1578, serious complaints were made to him about the mismanagement of *madad i-ma'ash* grants. He deputed Shaikh Farid Bakhari, a Shaikhzada to make enquiries, thereby demonstrating that he meant to be impartial and to reach the truth.[1] Farid Bukhari confirmed the allegations were, testified, but Akbar took no action against Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi at this stage.

After Akbar's return to Fathpur, the case against the brahman was reopened. The delay in decision had made it a serious matter. The ladies of the Imperial harem, presumably the Rajput princesses had come to be interested in it and had begun to persuade the Emperor to set the brahman free, but Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi's apparent demand for capital punishment prevented the Emperor from taking a firm stand on the question. When the Shaikh's importunity became limitless, the Emperor said that he had already left the matter in his hands. Thereupon the Shaikh ordered the execution of the brahman.

The Emperor was shocked. He had believed that the Shaikh would not go to extremes in view of his own reluctance. The Rajput princesses and the Hindu courtiers poured oil on his fire of anger. They said, "Your Majesty, you have pampered these Mullas; and now their insolence has reached such a pitch that they pay no heed to your Majesty's wishes, and even put men to death without obtaining your sanction in order to exhibit their own power." The leaven of dissatisfaction which had long been working in the Emperor's mind at length fermented and overflowed.

When the next round of religious discussion started at Fathpur, a bitter conflict between Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and Makhdumu'l Mulk burst into the open. Makhdumu'l Mulk published a tract seeking to prove that Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi had on a previous occasion unjustly killed one Khizr Khan Sarwani, who was accused of reviling the Prophet, and another man called Mir Hubsh, who was alleged to have been a Shi'i; and that it was wrong to repeat the prayers after him, not only because he was undutiful towards his father but also because he was afflicted with haemorrhoids. Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi snubbed him; saying that he was a fool and utterly misguided; and the 'ulma became furious partisans of one or the other.[1]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 234.

One night at the Anup Talao (tank), the Emperor himself initiated a discussion on the execution of the brahman. Badauni narrates what happened as follows:

Akbar ordered certain "time-serving *muftis* and stirrers-up of strife" to discuss the question until it was threadbare. Some of them said that the witnesses were not properly cross-examined. Others said, "It is strange that Shaikh 'Abdu'n-Nabi should claim to be a descendant of the Imam-i 'A'zam (Abu Hanifa) and act against the decision of his school of jurisprudence, according to which the cursing of the Prophet by an unbeliever who has submitted to a Muslim ruler gives no ground for Muslims to break their agreement, and in no way absolves the ruler from his obligation to safeguard infidel subjects. The question has been treated in detail in the works of the Hanafi *fiqh*; and it is hard to understand how the Shaikh can have so opposed himself to the principles of his ancestors." All at once the Emperor's glance fell on him (Badauni) standing far off; turning to him, he beckoned him and said, "Come forward." He advanced, and the Emperor put the question, 'Have you heard it said that supposing there are ninety-nine traditions inflicting the punishment of death for a certain offence, and one tradition allowing the accused to be set at liberty, *muftis* should prefer that one tradition.' He said, 'Yes, it is just as Your Majesty has said; and the question turns on the maxim; Verily, legal punishments are set aside if there is any doubt'; and he translated the maxim into Persian. The Emperor said with evident sorrow, 'Perhaps Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi was not aware of this ruling when he put the unfortunate brahman to death yet how could that be?' Badauni replied, 'The Shaikh is undoubtedly a learned man; therefore he must have had some wise purpose in view in knowingly giving an order contrary to this tradition.' The Emperor said, 'What purpose could he have had in mind?' Badauni said, 'The suppression of sedition and the uprooting of the seeds of insolence from the minds of the common people (obviously the Hindus),' and quoted some traditions of Qazi 'Iyaz on the subject. Certain mischievous persons said, Qazi 'Iyaz was a Maliki, and his decisions have no weight in a land of Hanafis.' Upon the Emperor asking Badauni 'What do you say to this?' He answered, 'Although Qazi 'Iyaz was a Maliki, it is permitted by the *shari'a* for a recognized *mufti* to pass sentence in accordance with his decisions.' The question was argued at length; during the discussion, the Emperor's moustache bristled like the whiskers of a tiger, and those who were standing behind him gestured to Badauni to desist from argument. All at once the Emperor said to Badauni, 'What you say is nonsense.'[1]

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 255.

Although the Maliki code had come to the rescue of the Emperor in legitimising his irregular marriages, in general it is fairly rigid, and Hanafi law permits greater elasticity. The above incident demonstrated that application of one code of law in a country like India, where men of varied sects and religious groups lived gave rise to considerable complications. A working administrative machinery could not be evolved without making the religious laws flexible and their interpretation liberal.

It was about this time that Shaikh Mubarak came from Agra to the Court at Fathpur. The Emperor related the incident to him and asked his opinion of the matter. The Shaikh took a quite different view of the controversy and said, "Your Majesty is the Imam of the age and a *mujtahid*. What need have you of the assistance of these 'ulama in issuing your commands, whether religious or secular?" They have no share in true knowledge but have got a baseless reputation for it." The Emperor said, "Since you are my teacher and I have learnt lessons from you, why do you not free me from dependence on these Mullas?" The Shaikh said, "Make a claim to the *ijtihad*, and demand from them a *mahzar*."[2]

Soon afterwards, Shaikh Mubarak (or perhaps Abu'l Fazl) raised the issue of *ijtihad* in the assembly of the 'ulama. The points that were debated centred round two questions:

1. As to whom the word *ijtihad* or *mujtahid* could be applied?
2. Was it desirable for the Imam i-'Adil who was fully acquainted

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[1] *MT*, III, pp. 79-83; Haig, pp. 127-31.
[2] *MT*, III, p. 83; Haig, p. 131.

with the affairs of the state and (consequently) superior to the *mujtahids*, to decide in accordance with the exigencies of the times, all legal questions on which there existed a difference of opinion?

The discussions seem to have commenced before 12 Rabi'I 987/9 May 1579. A large assembly of saiyids, 'ulama, sufis, and nobles had gathered for the purpose. During one of the discussions about the functions of the *Imam i'Adil*, it was suggested that the first four Caliphs used to themselves recite the *khutbahs* during Friday prayers and the two 'Ids. The Abbasids had reviewed the tradition, and some distinguished rulers like Timur (1370-1405) and Mirza Ulugh Beg (1446-49) themselves recited the *khutbah*.[1] Akbar decided to follow the footsteps of his own ancestors.

On Friday 1 Umada I 987/26 June 1579, Akbar went up into the pulpit of the Jami'mosque at Fathpur and recited these verses composed by Faizi:

Almighty God, that on me the kingship conferred,
A mind of wisdom, and an arm of strength conferred,
To justice and equity, He did me guide;
Expelled all but justice from my thought.
His attributes beyond all comprehension soar,
Exalted is His Majesty, Allahu-Akbar (Almighty God).

He then recited the *fatiha* (the first chapter in the Qur'an), got down from the pulpit, and offered the Friday prayers. Badauni, differs from others historians of the period in saying, "All at once he (Akbar) stammered and became nervous, and though assisted by others, he could with great difficulty recite the three verses which Shaikh Faizi had composed; he quickly came down from the pulpit, and ordered Hafiz Muhammad Amin *khatib* to lead the prayers."[2] No other author records that Akbar became nervous.[3] It is quite likely that Akbar was not able to address the congregation like a professional *khatib* and needed prompting; for after all, he could not read himself and would have had to memorise the verses. The *khutbah* was undoubtedly short and different from the usual ones recited in Arabic. It reiterated the theory that the Emperor derived his power from God—a virtual concomitant of the theory that he was *khalifah* of Allah.

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 268; Lowe, p. 276.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 269; *Ibid*, p. 277.

[3] Even Shaikh Nuru'l Haq, the son of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi does not complain of nervousness on the part of Akbar (*Zubdat'ut Tawarikh*, f. 157a).

The decision about the position of *ijtihad* still engaged the attention of the 'ulama, but to get them to agree on a declaration and sign it, was a formidable task. Shaikh Mubarak most tactfully brought to bear upon it the weight of his learning and the debating skill. Main issues were apparently discussed one by one, and a decision was reached on the basis of the current *hadises* on the subject; though the authenticity of some of these is doubtful. Makhdumu'l Mulk, Sadru's Sudur Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, Qazi Khan Badakhshi, a distinguished scholar of *kalam* and philosophy, the chief qazi, Jalalu'd Din Multani and the Sadr i-Jahan Mufti i-Kul, wrote the *tazkira* or *mahzar* and affixed their seals. Nizamu'd Din Ahmad Bakhshi and Badauni have copied the document in their histories. Badauni calls it a *mahzar*;[1] Nizamu'd Din, a tazkira.[2] It goes as follows:

> "The purpose of the emphasis on this matter and stress on this fact is that Hindustan (may it be protected from all calamities!) has through the blessings of the imperial justice and well-chosen administrative measures become the centre of security and tranquillity, and the orbit of justice and beneficence. All classes of men, high and low, and specially the godly 'ulama and discerning wise men, who are guides in the plain of salvation, and the travellers following the path of those who have been endowed with learning, turning their faces to this country from the Arabic and non-Arabic speaking world have settled down here. Now all the eminent 'ulama who are well versed in all the departments of knowledge relating to jurisprudence and have acquired mastery over *ma'qul*[3] and *manqul*[4] are endowed with the attributes of piety, honesty and integrity, have thoughtfully considered the deep meaning of the beneficient Quranic verses, such as "Obey God and obey the Prophet and those who are in command

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 271. [2] *Tabaqat*, II, p. 345.

[3] Knowledge based on reasoning. [4] Knowledge based on traditions.

among you."[1] (They have also paid attention to) the following genuine traditions, "Surely the man who is dearest to God on the day of Judgment is the *Imam i-'Adil*" and "Whoever obeys the *amir*, verily obeys Me, and whoever rebels against him rebels against Me" and "The justice of one hour is better than the saying of prayers all night, and of fasting every day for sixty years."[2] They have examined the above in the light of rational and traditional evidence. (After this thorough scrutiny) they have concluded and decided that the rank of a just Sultan is higher, in the eyes of God, than that of a *mujtahid*, and that His Majesty the Sultan of Islam, the asylum of mankind, the commander of the faithful, the shadow of God over worlds Abu'l Fath Jalalu'd Din Muhammad Akbar Badshah i-Ghazi (may God for ever perpetuate his kingdom) is a most just and wise king and endowed with a knowledge of God. Should, therefore, a religious question arise in future, and the opinions of the *mujtahids* be at variance; and should His Majesty, through his penetrating understanding and clear thinking, adopt any of the conflicting opinions on the point for the welfare of mankind and proper functioning of the administrative affairs of the world, and should he issue a decree to that effect, that order shall be acceptable to all (the *mujtahids*) and obedience to it shall be obligatory and binding upon high and low alike.

Further, should His Majesty, through his own judicious discretion, promulgate a command from among the existing rulings (of the *mujtahids*), its compliance would be obligatory and binding upon all the people, provided always that such an order is not opposed to the *nas* (explicit injunction of the Qur'an) and is calculated to benefit mankind at large. Any opposition to such an order passed by His Majesty shall involve the divine displeasure in the world to come and religious and worldly loss.

This truth-augmenting document has been written with no intention but (the elevation of the name of God) and the fulfilment of obligations towards Islam, and is attested by the 'ulama of the faith and the rightly guided *faqihs* (lawyers) in the month of Rajab 987/August-September 1579."[3]

[1] *Qur'an*, IV, 59. [2] *Counsel For Kings*, pp. 71-72, 90-91.
[3] *MT*, II, pp. 271-72; Lowe, pp. 279-80; *Tabaqat*, II, pp. 345-46.

The preamble to the document makes its purpose adequately clear. It refers to that characteristic of Mughal India of which both Akbar and his son Jahangir were proud. Jahangir says:

> "The followers of various faiths had room in the broad expanse of my father's incomparable dominions. This was different from the practice in other kingdoms of the world, for in Iran there is room for Shi'is alone and in Turkey, India and Turan there is room for only the Sunnis. In the wide expanse of the Divine compassion there is room for all classes and the followers of all creeds; so in his dominions, limited on all sides only by the salt sea, on the principle that the shadow must have the same properties as light, there was room for followers of opposite religions, and for beliefs right and wrong, and the road to altercation was closed. Sunnis and Shi'is met in one mosque, and Franks and Jews in one Church, and observed their own forms of worship."[1]

In fact Akbar's policy of peace with all took some time to take root, but the *mahzar* was the first effective declaration of the principles which he had decided to implement firmly.

The traditions alluded in the *mahzar* envisaged a more reasonable and proper balance between political needs and theological questions. Traditions ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad went to the extent of saying, "Oh mankind, obey God, even though He set over you as your ruler a mutilated Abyssinian slave," or "Obey your rulers whatever may happen, for if they bid you do anything different from what I have taught you, they shall be punished for it and you will be rewarded for your obedience; and if they bid you do anything different from what I have taught you, the responsibility is theirs and you are quit of it. When you meet God (on the day of Judgment) say, 'O Lord, Thou didst send us Prophets and we obeyed them by Thy permission, and You set over us Caliphs and we obeyed them by Thy permission, and our rulers gave us orders and we obeyed them for Thy sake."[2]

The traditions mentioned in the *mahzar* seek to vindicate the importance of justice, which all Muslim thinkers from the times of Nizamu'l Mulk Tusi and Ghazali were in the habit of regarding as the foremost political virtue and necessity. The sultans were never expected to be proficient in *shari'a* themselves; for the 'ulama, as the government officers specialising in the *shari'a* were there to advise them. The *mahzar* empowered Akbar to exercise his power only in the event of a difference of opinion among the 'ulama. No new order could be issued unless there was a ruling of the 'ulama in its favour. In all cases it was binding that orders should be based on Quranic injunctions and calculated to do good to the people. The powers conferred by the document were not absolute. It did not curtail the legitimate powers of the 'ulama but only stopped their indiscreet use of authority. It bestowed no new power on Akbar, but only reiterated the powers which as a ruler he legally enjoyed. It reminded the 'ulama that the state machinery was meant to do good to people.

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[1] *Tuzuk*, p. 16; *RB*, I, pp. 37-38.

[2] T. W. Arnold, *The Caliphate* (London, 1965), pp. 49-52.

Badauni gives an account of the preparation of the *mahzar* on two occasions in the second volume of the *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh* and once again in the third volume.[1] Before reproducing the *mahzar* in the second volume of his history he says that some signed it willingly and some unwillingly.[2] After reproducing the document, he says that only Shaikh Mubarak willingly signed it, while the others affixed their signatures reluctantly. According to him, Shaikh Mubarak added a note at the bottom stating that he signed his name most willingly, for this was something to which he had been anxiously looking forward for several years.[3]

In his account of Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi (in vol. III) Badauni says, "Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and Makhdumu'l Mulk were forcibly made to attend that assembly of base fellows as if they were insignificant people. No one exhibited respect to them, they took their seats in the *saffi-ni'al* (a place where slippers are left) and they were forced much against their will to attest the decree."[4] According to him the main opponents were Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and Makhdumu'l Mulk. He also gives us to understand that at that time Makhdumu'l Mulk was bent upon destroying Abdu'n Nabi and had caused the reopening of cases

[1] *MT*, II, pp. 270, 272; III, p. 83. [2] *MT*, II, p. 270.
[3] *MT*, II, p. 272. [4] *MT*, III, p. 83.

which Abdu'n Nabi was alleged to have decided wrongly. It seems, therefore, that the impending threat to their power patched up their quarrels and both opposed the *mahzar*.

The powers reiterated by the *mahzar* were not compatible with Abu'l Fazl's theory of "Perfect Man" which we shall discuss in chapter ten. He did not, therefore, reproduce the *mahzar* in the *Akbar Nama* and, minimising its importance, gave a garbled account of the event. He concludes:

> "When the sublime meetings (for religious discussions) were brightened by the light of the Unique one of Truth's banquet and of intellectual power, and the luminary of recognition shone for the distant as for the near; the acute and awakened of heart, and the wisdom-choosing seekers after knowledge, who were halted in various religions and divers paths of the ancients, and in the winding-back alleys and ruined bye-paths, and were seeking for relief from their confusion, held a conference with the blissfully wise and the right-thinking. (They said), 'Assuredly if the rank of *ijtihad*, which is lower than the dignity of a pure soul (nafsi-qudsi, like Akbar), be a dispeller of the darkness of doubts, a wise sovereign shall by choice institutions become the pacifier of disturbed hearts. But every one does not know the latter, while everyone is familiar with the first. It is fitting then that the happy hivers of wisdom should come together and refer the old, heart-gnawing pain to this new physician. The medicine suitable for the age is to address the king by the style of *ijtihad* and then to represent to him the confusion of religions and creeds and to beg him to untie the knot."[1]

According to Abu'l Fazl, Akbar at first did not accede to their request, but subsequently realised that "to come forth from the position of commander-in-chief of the spiritual world (*Sipah Salari i-Jahan i-Maani*) to this office and to apply his mind to it, was, in reality, an adorning of the veil and a choosing of a screen. On 23 Shahriyur, Divine month, (2 September 1579) the assemblage of the enlightened was successful, and the thoughts of the wise agreed upon this, that 'The world's lord is the *imam* of the Time, and the *mujtahid* of the age. Whatever he selects from the conflicting opinions of the ancient (scholars) and from those belonging to the sect upon sect of eloquent truth-seekers compliance with this on the part of the whole of mankind would be the source of attracting the Divine favour. To this statement they attached their seals, and a record of enlightenment (*agahi nama*) was executed. Maulana 'Abd'ullah Sultanpuri, who had the lofty title of Makhdumu'l Mulk, Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi (whose fame they trumpeted forth as *Shaikhu'l Islam*), Ghazi (Qazi) Khan Badakhshi, Hakimu'l Mulk and other great sages signed and sealed it."[1]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 270; Bev, III, p. 393-94.

According to V.A. Smith the document "was suggested by the information then becoming available concerning the position of the Pope in Western Europe." He says that "We need not trouble about the technical discussions which raged round the interpretation of the legal terms, *Mujtahid* and *Imam i-'Adil*. It will suffice to say that Akbar was solemnly recognised as being superior in his capacity of *Imam i-'Adil* to any other interpreter (*mujtahid*) of Muslim law, and practically was invested with the attribute of infallibility."[2] Smith's logic is strange; the document was signed by the scholars versed in Islamic jurisprudence and no justice can be done to it without understanding the implications of the technical terms used. Although the information about the power of Pope was available in Akbar's reign, it had no relevance to the question of *ijtihad*, which has a significance all its own.

F.W. Buckler examined the technical terms used in the *mahzar*, but by interpreting them in the light of the popular beliefs of the twentieth century, missed the real point. M.L. Roychoudhuri copied the same argument in his *Din Ilahi*, exhibiting a similar disregard for sixteenth century Iranian and Turkish institutions. Buckler says: "So the Mughal 'ulama simply placed Akbar above the *Mujtahidin*—the Shi'a 'ulama of Persia—and therefore beyond the Persian religious jurisdiction."[3] Further, "The Mahzar... was intended to fix the position of Akbar in the Muslim world by eliminating him from the religious and political control of Persia, but without committing him to the allegiance of the Ottomon Khalifah."[4]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 270; Bev, III, pp. 394-95.

[2] Smith, pp. 178-79. [3] F. W. Buckler, Mahzar, *JRAS*, 1924, p. 591.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 591-92.

Neither conclusion is correct. Not all *mujtahids* are Shi'i 'ulama. Imam Shafi'i regarded the *mujtahid* as one who (by his own exertions) formed his own opinion, being thus the exact opposite of the *muqallid* (imitator). The *mujtahids* were divided into several categories; the founders of the four schools were characterised as the absolute (*mutlaq*) *mujtahids*. Those who by their knowledge of previous decisions had gained the right to answer specific questions submitted to them called *mujtahidin bi'l fatwa* (by legal opinion). The status of the Shi'i *mujtahid*, who is believed to be a spokesman of the twelfth Imam who is yet to appear, is altogether different.[1] The Sunni *mujtahid* in a sense is a mere *mufti* (who issues a fatwa), and Akbar was empowered to select from the conflicting opinions of the *muftis*.

Professor Buckler further says that "the main fact, however, to be realised is that the Shah of Persia regarded the Mughal Padshah as his Nawab; and that among the Mughals there was a party which was disposed to recognise this hegemony from motives either of religions or rivalry."[2] The above view is also not based upon facts. After the death of Shah Tahmasp Safavi (1524-76), Iran itself was plunged into anarchy. Shah Tahmasp's successors, Isma'il II (1576-78) and Muhammad Khudabanda (1578-81), were too weak to assert their superiority over Akbar even on the ground that Humayun owed his throne to the help of Shah Tahmasp. The Irani party at the Mughal Court was not yet firmly established and depended on Akbar's support in its struggle for existence. It could afford to antagonise no section. To the Iranis, Nauwab was not the inferior title it came to be in British India. The Safavid themselves assumed the title of Nauwab (deputies) for they claimed that they were the deputies of the twelfth Imam. By addressing Akbar as Nauwab, the Shi'i Shah offered him the highest honour his own sect would allow. Similarly Buckler's remark that "it is significant that the *Mahzar* of 1579 contains no single clause which an orthodox Shi'a could not accept"[3] is mistaken. For no Isna 'Ashari Shi'i can accept anybody except his twelfth Imam as *Imam i-'Adil*, the concept of *'Adl* (justice) in Shi'i theology being very rigid.

Professor Buckler further asserts that "the simple acknowledgment of the Sunni creed would have brought him technically at least, under the authority of the Ottomon Sultan of Rum the acknowledged *khalifah* of the Prophet and the leader of the faithful."[1] In 1924, when Buckler wrote his paper, the Indian Sunnis had accepted the Ottoman Sultans as their *khalifah* for political and pan-Islamic reasons, but neither Sher Shah nor Akbar ever acknowledged the Ottoman Sultan as the *khalifah* of the Sunni world. Neither of them accepted his overlordship. Sher Shah nonetheless envied the control exercised by the Ottomans over the holy places of Mecca and Medina. Badauni says that when Mir Saiyid Rafi'u'd Din Safavi begged leave from Sher Shah to depart for Mecca and settle down there, the king answered:

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[1] *EI*, old, II, pp. 448-49. [2] *JRAS*, 1924, p. 604.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 606.

> "I should have no objection to make on this score, were it not that I have kept you with me for a special object, which is that I intend in a short time by the help of God, He is blessed and exalted, to clear the heart—delighting plain of Hindustan of the thorns of infidelity, and soon to reduce the forts which remain with very little difficulty; and, passing along the seashore to fight with those Qizilbashes who oppose the progress of the company of pilgrims to the Ka'bah and have added objectionable innovations to the established religion and straight path of Muhammad's religion (Sunnism); and to send you thence with a mission bearing letters to the Sultan of Rum, in order that, having knitted the bonds of religious brotherhood between us, you may bear to him a request on my behalf to be entrusted with the serving of one of the two holy places (Mecca and Medina), may God increase their dignity. Then I will come up from one direction and the Khwandgar from the other, and we will clear the Qizilbash from between us.'[2]

The Indian Mughals never ceased to take pride in the exploits of their ancestor Timur, who in July 1402 had defeated the Ottoman Bayazid Yildirim (1389-1402) and taken him captive. Babur's assumption of the title of Padshah, and his policy of issuing coins bearing the name of the first four Caliphs, were steps calculated to assert his independence of all Muslim powers, Sunni

[1] *Ibid*, p. 593.

[2] *MT*, I, p. 370.

as well as Shi'i.

In 1555 when Sidi 'Ali Reis Katib i-Rumi, the Turkish admiral, whom the Portuguese had defeated, visited Humayun's Court and assumed the role of Turkish ambassador, his manners and experience made a good impression upon the Court, but the Ottoman claims to paramountcy broached by Sidi 'Ali Reis evoked no positive response from Humayun, although his position at that time was very precarious. After Akbar's accession to the throne, a letter was sent to Sultan Suleiman I of Turkey, (1520-66) who was addressed as "he who has attained the exalted rank of the Caliphate," and prayers were offered that "his Caliphate may abide forever," but at the same time the Sultan was reminded that there was installed on "the seat of the Saltanat and the throne of the *Khilafat* of the realms of Hind and Sind, a monarch whose magnificence is equal to that of Solomon."[1] The Ottoman Sultan seems to have sent no reply, and no diplomatic relations were established between the Sultan and Akbar; though scholars continued to migrate from the Turkish domains.

After his occupation of Surat (1573), Akbar exhibited increasing interest in the promotion of pilgrimages to Mecca. This, like his annual pilgrimage to Ajmer, was religious as well as political. He had earned the gratitude of the Sherifs of Mecca, and of other dignitaries and the pious of the holy towns, by his largesse and munificent gifts.

In fact, by 1579 Akbar had decided to assert himself as one of the supreme powers of the Islamic world, and considered himself strong enough to balance the powers of Iran and Central Asia. He saw the alliance between the Uzbeks and Turkey against the Iranis as a potent threat to his own ambitions, and was always in search of measures to weaken Turkey. There is no reason to disbelieve Father Monserrate, according to whom Akbar informed Father Rodolf "that he wished to make a treaty with the King of Portugal against the king of the Turks;[2] promising to finance any action taken against the latter.

The *mahzar* had no bearing on Akbar's relations with Iran, Central Asia or Turkey; nor was it intended to placate any section of the Muslim nobility in India. There was indeed serious

[1] *The Caliphate*, p. 160. [2] *The Commentary*, p. 171.

dissatisfaction among the Turani nobles over the implementation of the *dagh*[1] scheme, but the unqualified support given by the Rajputs, Iranis and Shaikhzadas to Akbar was strong enough to override the Turani opposition. The *mahzar* was designed to bring all matters affecting the life and wellbeing of his subjects, both Hindus and Muslims, directly under the Emperor's control. It sought to obviate the possibility of playing with the life of the people in the name of orthodoxy or Islam.

Although Shaikh Mubarak initiated the matter and thoroughly discussed it, he was in no way original. This may be another reason why Abu'l Fazl ignored his father's contribution in his account of the *mahzar* in the *Akbar Nama*. Shaikh Mubarak seems to have silenced the 'ulama on the strength of the irrefutable authority of the scholars such as Jalallud-Din Dauwani who in *Nuru'l Hidaya* had strongly argued that every decision of a *mujtahid* was not correct. The different schools interpreted the same proposition in a different way. It was the duty of a man of prudence to weigh the contradictory views on the scale of reason and to accept the view which was most reasonable and was supported by convincing proof.[2]

Of considerable interest are the views upon the *mahzar* expressed in recent works by two eminent Pakistani scholars. Dr. I.H. Qureshi says:

> "There can be little doubt that it was a patently dishonest document and Shaikh Mubarak of all people must have known it to be so. The intention was not to remove any genuine difficulty in the legal affairs of the empire; it was simply to give Akbar the opportunity of instigating differences with the orthodox opinion and then posing as the arbitrator to help the cause of heresy. Since Akbar was not properly educated, he certainly was not qualified to choose between one legal opinion and another with any legal acumen. It was intended to be an instrument in the hands of heterodoxy and was taken to be so in learned circles. Its unpopularity can be judged by the fact that it is not recorded that Akbar utilised

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[1] Branding of horses to control the fraudulent practices of the *mansabdars*; *AN*, III, pp. 147-48.

[2] *Nuru'l Hidayah, Fi'l Imamah* (Delhi Persian Ms I.O.) ff. 150a-151b.

it even once."[1]

S.M. Ikram, who was formerly an eminent officer of the Pakistan Civil Service and was responsible for administering Muslim law in the Sub-continent says:

> "In the legal field, the Declaration of 1579 is a landmark in the evolution of Indo-Muslim law. Even before Akbar, rulers like Balban and 'Ala'u'd Din Khalji had claimed a freedom of action, irrespective of the *Shari'at*. That however, was rooted in sheer autocracy. In drafting the Declaration, however, the question was faced squarely with the help of lawyers and intellectuals. Later misuse by Akbar of powers conferred on him Have cast a dark shadow on this document, but studied carefully and dispassionately, it appears to be a major constructive effort, fully in conformity with the Islamic law and providing a basis for the adjustment of the demands of temporal Government and the *Shari'at*."[2]

In fact the declaration was neither a "dishonest document" designed "to be an instrument in the hands of heterodoxy" nor "a landmark in the evolution of Indo-Muslim law." There was nothing revolutionary in it. Akbar was empowered only to select from the divergent views that which best served the interests of his subjects and his administrative needs. It was the duty of the *mujtahids* to examine the legal implications and Akbar himself was not supposed to scrutinize the legal authorities. The qualification most essential "to choose between one legal opinion and another" was administrative experience and judgment of what was in the peoples' best interest. No one can deny that Akbar was able in both respects.

The document was not designed "to instigate the differences" but intended to obtain an authoritative opinion from the *mujtahids* on controversial issues. It was presumed that no *mujtahid* would issue an illegal decree. Whenever there was unanimity among the *mujtahids*, the question of Akbar's interference did not arise. What Akbar was most interested in at that time was the need to arouse a sense of confidence in justice, specially in the minds of the Muslims who had immigrated to India and in those of his Hindu subjects.

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[1] I. H. Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent*, p. 141.

[2] S. M. Ikram and S. A. Rashid, *History of Muslim Civilisation in India and Pakistan* (Lahore, 1961), p. 259.

There can be nothing but sympathy with the viewpoint expressed by I. H. Qureshi, in the same book that "an average Muslim is maddened by nothing so much as by a deliberate insult to the Prophet."[1] It should not be forgotten that Akbar's government was a civilised one, well above the mob mentality, and it wished to do justice within the legal framework. Even Makhdumu'l Mulk had denounced the capital punishment which Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi meted out to Khizr Khan Sarwani Afghan although he was accused of reviling the Prophet. Badauni himself confirmed that the Hanafi law permitted the *muftis* to give the benefit of doubt to the accused. These were "genuine difficulties" in the legal affairs of the empire and Akbar deserves the credit for having them removed through *mahzar*.

Professor Muhammad Mujeeb, a distinguished Indian scholar ignores the spirit of the *mahzar*, when he says:

> "Orthodoxy could be enforced only through the secular arm, which meant that a person accused of holding heretical views could be punished only by order of the sultan, and the sultan could give the accused a chance to explain his belief or his conduct. There had been numerous cases in which rulers called upon those accused of holding heretical opinion to offer explanation. The only innovatian was that a statutory form was given to a convention."[2]

At that time Akbar was not interested in enforcing orthodoxy nor was he anxious "to be considered a good Muslim,"[3] as Professor Sri Ram Sharma, another Indian scholar thinks, nor had the *mahzar* "paved the way for the replacement of Muslim law (*Shar'*)"[4] as Professor A.L. Srivastava interprets it. The view of Dr. Qureshi that "it is not recorded that Akbar utilised it even once" is also untenable. Badauni observes that "No sooner had His Majesty obtained the *fatwa*, than the road to *ijtihad* was open, the superiority of the intellect of the *imam* was established, and no opponent was left".[1] The agreement reached in the *mahzar* made the appointment of *qazis* of different schools of Sunni jurisprudence and even of non-Sunnis regular practice in Akbar's reign. With confidence in Akbar's justice even the Shi'i Nuru'llah Shushtari[2] Could work as the *qazi* of Lahore successfully and elicit the following appreciative remarks from an orthodox Sunni such as Mulla Badauni.

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[1] *The Muslim Community*, p. 142.

[2] M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims* (London, 1967), p. 243.

[3] Sri Ram Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, (Second edition, London, 1962), p. 33.

[4] A.L. Srivastava, *Akbar The Great* II, (Agra, 1967), p. 15.

> "In truth he has reduced the insolent *muftis* and the crafty and subtle *muhtasibs* (censor of public morals) of Lahore, who venture to give lessons to the teacher of the angels (*Iblis* or the devil), to order, and has closed to them the avenues of bribery, and restrained them within due bounds as closely as a nut is enclosed in its shell, and to such a degree that stricter discipline could not be imagined."[3]

In fact, in a situation in which there was no way out of an impasse, the only alternative the rulers had was to depose the *qazi* who insisted that there was no alternative to his own interpretation of the law. At Badauni's suggestion, Akbar had earlier dismissed Qazi Ya'qub, the Hanafi *qazi* and had appointed a Maliki *qazi* in order to obtain the *fatwa* legalising *mutah* marriages. After 1579, no legal crises seems to have occurred for about eighty years. It was Aurangzeb who, despite his claims of orthodoxy, was threatened with serious crises because of his efforts to flout the verdicts of his qazis. One he dismissed at the beginning of his reign[4] and the other he asked to leave for Mecca in the middle[5] of his reign.

The disgruntled 'ulama could not easily oppose the *mahzar* which they had themselves signed. What they did was to misinterpret the use of word *Allah u-Akbar* in the *khutbah* which was read publicly, by implying that it suggested that Akbar thought himself to be God. The formula "There is no God but God, and Akbar is God's *khalifah*," which the Emperor had considered introducing but whose use had been restricted to a few people in the palace,[6] was seen as an attempt by Akbar to pose as the equal of a prophet, if not of God. Certainly Akbar did not discourage the credulous, and the flatterers, who asserted that he possessed divine powers. Some "idle fellows" who, according to Abu'l Fazl, believed that "Akbar was a manifestation of divinity" began to propagate their faith publicly, and the Emperor, in pursuance of his policy of "peace with all," did not prevent them.[1] Indeed this was a case of a rabid misuse of the policy of "peace with all," as by doing nothing, Akbar gave tacit approval to their belief. The Emperor himself, however, strongly repudiated allegations made against him. He repeatedly affirmed:

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 272; Lowe, p. 280.

[2] *MRM*, pp. 314-23.

[3] *MT*, III, p. 138; Haig, p. 194.

[4] Isar Das Nagar, *Futuhat i-'Alamgiri* (Rieu, I, 269a) ff. 36b-37a.

[5] Sadiq Khan and Ma'muri, *Shah Jahan Nama* (Rieu, III, 1008 b), f 173 b.

[6] See *Infra*, Chapter 10.

> "How could it enter into the narrow thoughts of the ignorant that an insignificant creature belonging to a dependent existence and of feeble intellect should ascribe to himself the status of divinity? There have been leaders of humanity who after coming into the world have by thousands of miracles expounded their Prophetic office. Times have passed and cycles have elapsed; yet this truth is cherished and is increasingly believed. The dust of refutation does not tend to settle down upon that truth. How could such a notion (i.e. of being God) enter the chamber of my mind. Why does such an evil thought bewilder the superficial and the worshippers of externals? Inasmuch as censure and reproach give a fresh lustre to hearts which are pure, it would be improper to reprove those black-hearted ones, who cause an increase of light."[2]

While the opposition of the 'ulama was mounting, the first Jesuit Mission arrived at Fathpur-Sikri on 28 February 1580. The Emperor's interest in the beliefs of the Jesuits and his failure to take sides with the 'ulama in religious discussions convinced a section of the Muslims that he was estranged from Islam. Abu'l Fazl points out that all those who condemned Akbar for entertaining hostile feelings against the Prophet Muhammad, ignored the fact that a large number of Saiyids (descendants of the Prophet) had risen to positions of honour and distinction in his service and that, in deference to their descent, the Emperor did not allow them to kiss his feet.[3] Akbar's credulous respect for Saiyids, like that of all Timurids of Iran, his impartiality in the

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[1] *AN*, p. 271; Bev, III, p. 397.
[2] *AN*, III, p. 272; Bev, III, p. 398.
[3] *AN*, III, pp. 272-73, Bev, III, p. 399.

Shi'i-Sunni controversies and his encouragement of the Iranis further provoked orthodox Sunnis, and they accused him of being a Shi'i. But Abu'l Fazl reminds his readers that Akbar also offered equal patronage to the Sunni Turanis. Likewise, Akbar's encouragement of brahmans and his admitting Hindus to high offices were misinterpreted as violating Islam and he was condemned a Hindu. Abu'l Fazl gives us to understand that dissatisfaction was felt against Akbar because of the following:

1. The assemblage of wise men of different religions and creeds, on the grounds that since everyone of them possessed some merit, no one was in a position to be reproached or raised above the other;
2. The policy of "peace with all," because it permitted all classes of people to enjoy Imperial patronage;
3. The Emperor's love of truth, which meant that the evil-mindedness of a section of "the base fellows" (the Court 'ulama and their supporters) was given play because he had in a short time exposed their ignorance.[1]

This seems to be a correct estimate of the situation. In November 1579 Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and 'Abdu'llah Sultanpuri were appointed leaders of a party of pilgrims, ordered to proceed to Mecca, and forbidden to return. Abu'l Fazl, recording this event, strongly criticises their ignorance, greed and reluctance to part with power.[2] Having failed to win the Emperor's favour through mean tactics, they had set out to misrepresent Akbar's policies and raise the whirlwind of rebellion with the help of supporters who stood in eminent danger of losing their power.

But their banishment did not affect various other signs of unrest. For example the enforcement of the laws about the branding of horses, the reduction of allowances and revenue reforms had already evoked dissatisfaction among a big section of the Mughal officials. The mishandling of the situation by the officials posted in Bihar sparked off a rebellion which spread to Bengal where the new governor Muzaffar Khan, appointed in March 1579, was tactless in his implementation of the new revenue and military regulations and in reconciling the dispossessed Afghans.

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 273; Bev, III, p. 400.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 277-78, Bev, III, pp. 405-06.

The government officials of Bengal, mostly Turanis, who unfurled the flag of rebellion, put Muzaffar Khan to death on 19 April 1580. After reciting the *khutbah* in the name of Akbar's foster brother, Mirza Hakim, they formed their own government. Between 1580 and 1582 the rebellion of Bihar and Bengal, which spread as far as Ghazipur, Banaras, Awadh and Katihar, considerably inhibited Akbar's plans but it was eventually suppressed owing to his tactful handling of the situation.

The 'ulama played a pominent role in whipping up religious frenzy. In February 1580, Akbar had appointed as *sadr* of Jaunpur, the Shi'i Mulla Muhammad Yazdi, who had left no stone unturned to convert Akbar to Shi'ism but had failed in the attempt. In Jaunpur he rallied the support of the Sunnis and began to spread wild rumours against Akbar's religious beliefs. As he was a known favourite of Akbar his misrepresentation were readily believed, and he issued a *fatwa* saying that rebellion against Akbar was lawful. He found a strong supporter in Mu'izzu'l Mulk, a Saiyid from Mashhad who had been holding a responsible position in the *sarkar* of Bihar since 1577. The deposed Hanafi Qazi Ya'qub, who had been appointed the qazi of Bengal, became another leader. They said that the rebellion was a divine vengeance for Akbar's depriving the 'ulama of their *madad i-ma'ash* grants.[1]

When the reports of their activities reached the capital, Akbar decided to take immediate action against them, but he proceeded with circumspection. Mulla Muhammad Yazdi and Mir Mu'izzu'l Mulk were summoned from Jaunpur. When they reached Firuzabad, about eighteen *kos* from Agra, the Emperor ordered that they should be separated from their guards and be taken to Gwaliar across the river Jamuna. Shortly afterwards another order was issued that the boats on which they were travelling were to be sunk. Qazi Ya'qub was summoned to Agra and was secretly done away with. 'Ali Akbar, the younger brother of Mu'izzu'l Mulk was brought to Court from his post in Zamaniya and was imprisoned.[2] Others suspected of rebellion were also secretly killed.

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 276; Lowe, pp. 284-85.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 277; Lowe, p. 285. 'Aziz Ahmad is thus in error when he claims, without quoting authority that Mulla Yazdi was "executed for declaring Akbar an apostate." There was much more to it than that, Mulla Yazdi had issued a fatwa, "To rise and revolt against this Emperor is

The 'ulama of Lahore, were transferred to other places. Qazi Sadru'd Din Lahori was appointed the qazi of Bharoch in Gujarat, Mulla 'Abdu'sh Shakur was appointed the qazi of Jaunpur, Mulla Muhammad Ma'sum of Bihar and Shaikh Munawwar were appointed as *sadrs* in Malwa. Only Shaikh Mu'in the grandson of the celebrated Maulana Mu'in Wa'iz who was very old, was spared. Of Hajji Ibrahim Sihrindi, whom Akbar had transferred to Gujarat, Badauni says:

> "He extracted much treasure and gold from *aima*[1] by means of bribes, and amassed a huge fortune. If they (the *aima*) would not pay the bribes he used to confiscate their lands. This was reported to the Emperor and it was pointed out that he was planning to escape to the Deccan, whereupon the Emperor, suspecting him of rebellion, sent for him, and committed him to the custody of Hakim Ainu'l Mulk."[2]

This severe action against the 'ulama and the sufis was dictated by administrative necessity and did not emanate from hostility to Islam nor to orthodox Muslims. There are also many instances indicating that Akbar did not fail to take steps which helped him win the sympathies of 'Muslims who were not involved in rebellion.

An important event in the religious history of the period was the announcement by Mir Abu Turab Wali that he was bringing back a stone bearing the foot-print of the Prophet Muhammad. Akbar had appointed him leader of the caravan pilgrims in 1577. The Mir alleged that the stone was a counter-part of the one brought back by Saiyid Jalal Bukhari (Makhdum Jahaniyan) in the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq. Abu'l Fazl says that although the Emperor knew that the claim was baseless, in deference to its being associated with the name of the Prophet Muhammad, he ordered that the caravan should halt four *kos* (8 miles) from the capital. The Emperor went with the eminent

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obligatory" (*MT*, II, 276; Lowe, p. 284) Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford, 1964), p. 170.

[1] Literally the word means religious leaders, but it was also used for the right to collect the land revenue of a given area of land. Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (Bombay, 1963), pp. 290, 306, 308.

[2] *MT*, II, pp. 277-78; Lowe, p. 285.

nobles and scholars to receive it and carried it upon his shoulder for some paces. The officers in turn brought it to the capital. Abu'l Fazl comments:

> "All this honour was done out of abundant perceptiveness, respect and appreciation, and wide toleration, in order that the reverence due to that simple-minded Saiyid might not be split on the ground of folly, and that jovial critics might not break out into smiles. Because of this great reverence, the cup of fancy of the short-sighted ones of the times (opponents of Akbar) was filled with dust; and the wicked and seditious sank into the pit of shame. The crooked and ill-natured ones who had been agitated on account of the inquiries into the proofs of prophecy and the doubts and misgivings which were exhibited about it (with which the books on *kalam* abound) were at once made infamous in the market of shame, while those who, because of their misfortune and bad nature had spoken idly and foolishly about the piety and godliness of that spiritual and temporal lord (Akbar) became the target of attack of (the people) of the world and faith."[1]

The reception given to the alleged foot-print was politically motivated but it must have undermined the 'ulama's attempts to raise a storm. An endeavor must have been made to show that Akbar was a hypocrite,[2] for a section of the 'ulama continued to oppose him, but the steps which the Emperor took to win the confidence of a big section of the Muslim elite went a long way towards blunting the edge of the weapons used by the 'ulama.

In February 1581, when Akbar marched northwards to suppress the rebellion by Mirza Hakim, he visited Shaikh Jalal Thaneswari (d. 989/1582), the aged *khalifah* of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi, (*c.* 1456-1537), the celebrated Chishti saint. This visit, too, was of great political importance insofar as it must have allayed any Chishti apprehensions aroused by the banishment of Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, a nephew of 'Abdu'l-Quddus Gangohi. It demonstrated that the Emperor was not hostile to the Chishtis or any other group of sufis, unless they were a danger to the state. Shaikh Jalal is said to have observed:

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 281; Bev, III, pp. 410-12.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 280; Lowe, pp. 272-73; Smith, p. 182.

"At this time our wishes are bound up in (assisting) the truthful throne-occupant.
For his pleasure, the heavens revolve."

At Akbar's instance, Shaikh Abu'l Fazl who accompanied him, said:

"You have spent a long life, and have enjoyed the saintly persons of your days. Can you tell of a cure for melancholy? And have you discovered a remedy for a distracted heart which is obsessed by differences?" First the Shaikh shed tears; then he recited the verse:

"Hail! Oh Sweet Content
(Thy) loftiness hath closed the path of (ambition) for both worlds.[1]

From Thaneswar, the Emperor marched to Sihrind, which he apparently found a hot-bed of Afghan disaffection. He ordered that all the *jagirdars*,[2] *shiqdars*[3] and *daroghas*[4] throughout the empire should compile and maintain a list of all the inhabitants of every village, and of their occupations, as no one was to be allowed to remain idle and everyone was to occupy himself with some trade or profession. They were also asked to keep a strict watch over the income and expenditure of each individual in order that the "outwardly good, but inwardly bad men" should be discovered.[5]

Akbar made a rapid march to Kabul and defeated Mirza Hakim, but he forgave him and returned to Fathpur. Early in November 1581 he crossed the Rawi and stayed at the Sara'i Daulat Khan. By that time he was convinced that no single individual could justly administer the *madad i-ma'ash* tenures for the whole empire. In order to streamline the work of making grants and supervising them adequately, he introduced a scheme appointing provincial *sadrs*. The following were appointed:

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[1] *AN*, III, pp. 341-42; Bev, III, pp. 500-01.

[2] The areas whose revenue the Emperor assigned to his officers in lieu of salary were called *jagirs* and the assignees were called *jagirdars* (holders of jagirs). See for a full exposition, *The Agrarian system of Mughal India*, pp. 257-70. See also chapter VI, *Infra*.

[3] *Shiqdars* were revenue officers, such as *'amils*; their duties differed in different reigns.

[4] Prefect of a town or a village.

[5] *AN*, III, pp. 346-47; Bev, III, p. 509.

Delhi, Malwa and Gujarat:	Hakim Abu'l Fath
Agra, Kalpi and Kalinjar:	Faizi
From Hajipur to Saru:	Hakin Huam
Bihar:	Hakim 'Ali
Bengal:	Hakim 'Ainu'l Mulk
Punjab:	Qazi 'Ali Badakhshi

In large cities he appointed as *qazis* "men free from bigotry" who would carefully supervise the work of the subordinate qazis and be vigilant in regard to the activities of "that crew of large-turbaned and long-sleeved ones (the 'ulama)."[1]

In Mecca, Makhdumu'l Mulk and Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi did not give up their hostility to each other, but they were united in slandering and making insinuations against Akbar. When they received the news of the rebellions in the Eastern provinces and Mirza Hakim's invasion, they left Mecca in the hope of taking advantage of the disaffection against Akbar. When they landed in India in the middle of 1582, they were dismayed to find that the rebellion had been crushed. They tried to seek the protection of the royal ladies with whom they had returned; but Akbar managed to have them imprisoned before the ladies could intervene.[2]

Makhdumu'l Mulk, who was over seventy, died at Ahmadabad; and orders were given that a valuation should be made of his property. Several boxes of gold ingots were discovered in his family graveyard, which he had had buried as corpses. These were confiscated together with his vast wealth including his books.[3]

Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi was brought to Fathpur. Reports had already reached Akbar that he and Makhdumu'l Mulk had left no stone unturned in denouncing and vilifying him. A conversation between Akbar and Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, probably relating to the latter's activity in Mecca and Medina, thus book a very unhappy turn. Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi addressed the Emperor rudely, whereupon Akbar, unable to restrain his anger, slapped his cheek; the Shaikh then asked why did he not strike with a knife. Finally, Akbar handed him over to Todar Mal so that he might check the accounts showing the expenditure of the money

[1] *AN*, III, p. 372; Bev, III, p. 546.

[2] *AN*, III, pp. 386-87; Bev, III, pp. 571-72; *MT*, II, p. 311.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 311; Lowe, p. 321.

given to the Shaikh for disbursement in Mecca.[1] It seems that Akbar had obtained an independent account of the disbursements made there and the two did not tally. For a long time, Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi remained imprisoned in the capital like a defaulting revenue officer, then one night in 992/1584—a mob burst into his prison and strangled him. It was believed that Abu'l Fazl was responsible for having him killed.[2]

Hajji Ibrahim Sihrindi, who was under the custody of Hakim 'Ainu'l Mulk, was summoned each evening to the religious discussions. He used to argue boldly with Shaikh Abu'l Fazl, Hakim Abu'l Fath and Shah Fathu'llah. In order to save himself by flattery, he produced an old and worm-eaten book, ascribed to Ibn 'Arabi in which it was written that the Lord of the Age would have many wives and would shave his beard. The fraud was, however, detected. Unabashed, he produced an old treatise ascribed to Mulla Abu Sa'id, the nephew of Miyan Man Panipati. It contained a tradition to the effect that a son of one of the companions of Prophet Muhammad came shaven into his presence, whereupon he remarked that the people of paradise would look like that. But this was again a fabrication and did not help Sihrindi.[3] Enquiries proved the charge of corruption against him and he was imprisoned in Ranthambor fort. In about September 1583, he tried to escape by letting himself down on a rope, but it broke and he fell down to the ground and died.[4]

The *mahzar* was intended to bring the order dominated by Makhdumu'l Mulk and 'Abdu'n Nabi to an end, but the part played by the 'ulama in the rebellion of the Eastern provinces and Mirza Hakim's revolt gave Akbar an excuse for crushing all those who were suspected of disloyalty. Hostility between different groups of the 'ulama and the sufis led to the ruin and harassment of some innocent people by those of the 'ulama in Akbar's confidence. The most pitiable case was that of Shaikh Husain Ajmeri, who in 1570 was deprived of his post as the custodion of Khwaja Mu'inu'd Din's tomb. It was alleged that his claim to be the descendant of the Khwaja was wrong, and the relations of Shaikh Salim Chishti of Fathpur gave evidence against him.[1] Akbar therefore banished him to Mecca, but he came to pay his respects at Fathpur just when Akbar was on the point of marching against Mirza Hakim. Badauni says, he did not salute according to the newly-introduced regulations, and the Emperor, who suspected him of entertaining rebellious designs, commanded that he be imprisoned in the fortress of Bhakkar. Some *qazis* of Fathpur were also imprisoned in that fortress and Badauni informs us that Shaikh Ibrahim Chishti, about whom we shall learn more in chapter six, was responsible for inducing Akbar to take action against them. In 1593-94 Mirza Nizamu'd Din Ahmad interceded on behalf of Shaikh Husain and the *qazis* and they were recalled to the Court. Others paid their respects in accordance with the current ceremonial style, but the Shaikh failed to do so. This did nothing to assuage the Emperor's suspicions and he ordered Mirza Nizamu'd Din to have a grant of 300 *bighas*[2] of land in Bhakkar made to Shaikh Husain as *madad i-ma'ash* and to despatch him there. The Shaikh was able to persuade the Emperor's mother to intercede on his behalf as follows:

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 311-12; Lowe, pp. 321-22.

[2] *MT*, III, gives 991 and II gives 992. For further comments on his death see Beveridge, III, pp. 572-73 n. 1.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 278; Lowe, p. 286.

[4] *MT*, II, p. 278.

> "My son, he (the Shaikh) has an aged and decripit mother in Ajmer, whose heart yearns to see her son again. How would it be if you were to give him leave to depart to Ajmer? He desires no *madad i-ma'ash* from you."

But Akbar did not accept his mother's recommendations and said:

> "Mother, he will start the business all over again as soon as he reaches there (Ajmer) and people will present him with abundant alms and gifts. He will misguide a large number of people. Let him summon his mother there (to Bhakkar)."[3]

Akbar loved his mother very dearly, and even the Emperor's favourites such as Hakim Abu'l Fath sought her advocacy.[1] Therefore, Akbar's outright rejection of his mother's recommendations concerning an old man of seventy shows that, having once uprooted the political leader-ship of the 'ulama and sufis, he was not prepared to take any steps which could help the resurgence of the old order. Holy men were patronised only so long as they confined themselves to religion. Jahangir used call such men members of the "army of prayer" (*lashkar-i du'a*); if he thought they had notions of wielding political influence, like Shaikh Nizam Thaneswari and Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi, he scornfully styled them "hypocrites and impostors" (*Shaiyad*).

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 87; Haig, p. 136. The following remarks of Badauni are very significant:
"The Shaikh, who was a man of great estate, lived in that province like a king, and the Emperor's regal jealousy, both on this account and on account of certain other events which happened, could not endure the Shaikh's position, so he ordered him to leave India........." (Haig, p. 137).

[2] *MT*, II, p. 300; Lowe, p. 309.

[3] *MT*, III, p. 88; Haig, p. 138.

In fact from the beginning of his reign, Akbar had intended to break the monopoly of the Afghans over the large areas of *madad i-ma'ash* grants which they had come to enjoy during the reign of their own rulers. Shaikh Gada'i failed in his attempts to do this, and until Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi was appointed, mismanagement and corruption were rampant. Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi owed his appointment to the fact that he was reputed to make independent judgments and had exhibited courage in refuting the views of his own father and uncle on *sama*."[2] During his tenure of office two significant contributions were made to the administration of the *madad i-ma'ash*:

1. The *madad i-ma'ash* enjoyed by the Afghans and the Chaudhris were resumed by the *khalisa*[3] and only those claims which 'Abdu'n-Nabi certified as correct were confirmed.
2. Those who held grants in different places were ordered to combine all their grants in one place of their own choice.[4]

The latter scheme was beneficial both to the grant-holders and to the government. Before the downfall of Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, Akbar's personal investigations into the rent-free grants of those who held more than five hundred *bighas* of land had led to a gradual reduction of the large areas enjoyed as *madad-i-ma'ash*. The main objective was to force the *madad-i ma'ash*-holder to engage in productive trades and profession rather than to be parasites on society. The new rules did bring about some change in outlook, and many members of the families of *madad i-ma'ash*-holders joined the government service, received *mansabs* and as we shall[1] see, did much to strengthen the new Mughal elite class. A large number of the grantees planted orchards on their land to enhance their income.[2] After 1589 a new rule was enforced to the effect that all *madad i-ma'ash* land "should consist of one-half of tilled land, and of one-half of land capable of cultivation; if the latter half be not so (i.e. the whole be tilled land), one fourth of the whole should be taken away and a new grant be issued for the remainder."[3] This step was offensive from the point of the grantees, but it released tilled land for government use and compelled the grantees to make better use of marginal land.

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[1] M. Bashir Hasan ed., *Ruq'at Hakim Abu'l Fath Gilani* (Lahore, 1968), p. 41. [2] *AA*, p. 222.

[3] *Khalisa*, or *Khalisa-i Sharifa* (the noble private domain) comprised the lands and sources of revenue reserved for the imperial treasury. *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, p. 259.

[4] *A'in*, I, p. 141; Blochmann, p. 279.

Madad i-ma'ash grants were first held only by Muslims, although some Delhi Sultans are known to have made rent-free land-grants to non-Muslims. The 15th century provincial Sultans, too, awarded *madad i-ma'ash* grants to some non-Muslim saints and scholars. The Sultans of Gujarat, for example, had given an *i'nam* land near Navsari to the Parsi Dastur Mihrji Rana.[4] As early as 1571 'Akbar had awarded 200 *bighas* of land to Udant Nath Jogi of Jakhbar in the Punjab.[5] This confirms that grants of land by Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi about 1575 to "the *mean, the rabble* and even to Hindus,"[6] as Badauni calls those who were not 'alims, were made at Akbar's instance. After 1580, the number of non-Muslim grantees steadily increased and land grants came to be awarded to Hindus, Jains and Parsees; and even the Jesuits received free land on which to build churches.[7] The *madad i-ma'ash* and subsistence allowance, Abu'l Fazl says, was conferred on four classes of men:

1. On the inquirers after wisdom, endowed with healthy views, who have withdrawn themselves from everything,

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[1] See *Infra*. [2] *A'in*, I, p. 141; Blochmann, p. 280.

[3] See the description of such documents in the *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, p. 302.

[4] H.S. Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History* (Bombay, 1939-57), p. 161.

[5] B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar* (Simla, 1967), pp. 50-52.

[6] *MT*, II, p. 205. [7] *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, pp. 313-22.

and make no distinction between night and day in searching after true knowledge.

2. On such as toil and practise self-denial and, while engaged in a struggle with the selfish passions of human nature, have renounced the society of men.
3. On such as are weak and poor, and have no strength for inquiry.
4. On honourable men of gentle birth who from want of knowledge are unable to provide for themselves by taking up a trade.[1]

The above description of the different categories does not indicate that in the awarding of revenue-free grants, the government intended to make any distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims, although the number of the Muslim beneficiaries was overwhelmingly large. The word *makhadim*, formerly used for Muslim religious classes only, came to include non-Muslims, and Hindu saints formed as much a part of the *lashkar i-du'a'* as did the Hindu ascetics. The reaction of the latter is best typified in the answer once given by Gosa'in Jadrup to Jahangir:

> "In what language can I return thanks for this gift of Allah, that in the reign of such a just king I can be engaged in the worship of my own Deity in ease and contentment, and that from no quarter does the dust of distractedness settle on the skirts of my purpose."[2]

After 1580 on, saints and ascetics who had no worldly desires became the object of the attention of the Mughal government: and the distribution of cash in alms began to assume increasing importance. This was not a new step; earlier Sultans had also made cash grants on a monthly or daily basis. Akbar, however, vastly improved the system. An officer always kept cash ready for Akbar to distribute to those in need.[3] Daily, monthly and yearly cash allowances called *waza'if* were paid regularly.[4] In 1583 Akbar built outside Fathpur Sikri two establishments to cater for feeding poor Hindus and Muslims, the former called *Dharmapura* (quarters of *dharma* or righteousness), and the latter known as *Khairpura* (quarters of liberality or nobility). Some of Abu'l Fazl's people were put in charge of them, and government money was spent on feeding Hindu and Muslim beggars. When groups of yogis began to flock there, a third establishment known as *Jogipura* (quarters for yogis) was also constructed.[1]

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[1] *A'in*, I, p. 140; Blochmann, p. 278.
[2] *Tuzak i-Jahangiri*, p. 5.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 252-53.
[4] *A'in*, I, p. 8; Blochmann, p. 14.

The system of the periodical scrutiny of the grant was introduced to remove discrepancies which occurred because of the changes in regulations and complaints against former *qazis*. It also increased the control of the state over the beneficiaries. During Sadr i-Jahan's tenure of *sadrship* (from 1589), orders were given that holders of one hundred *bighas* or even less should present their claims to the Emperor through him. He had to scrutinize all grants with the concurrence of Abu'l Fazl, and was authorized to increase or reduce them.[2] The rule was applied to both Muslims and non-Muslims. The *farman* issued to Udant Nath in 1586, for example, shows that Abu'l Fazl had recommended that he should receive 78 *bighas* of land, but that the Sadr i-Jahan rejected the proposal and raised it to the 100 *bighas* for which the *farman* was ultimately issued.[3]

When Akbar left his capital and marched through the countryside, he often summoned the local holders of rent-free grants into his presence. Sometimes the *madad i-ma'ash*-holders called on the Emperor of their own accord. It helped him to discover their actual condition and to reassure himself about their loyalty. One such incident is vividly described by Shaikh Ilahdad Faizi Sihrindi. In October 1585, when Akbar reached Sihrind en route to Kabul, he informed Shaikh Abu'l Fazl that it was the conquest of Sihrind which had paved his father's road to the acquisition of Hindustan, and ordered that the *makhadims* of Sihrind be informed of the happy event of his arrival in order that they should call upon him in the hope of receiving his bounty. They avoided seeing him, however, Faizi Sihrindi diplomatically says that the messengers, under "some foul intention, struck terror into the hearts of that chicken-hearted group and they did not present themselves." When the imperial cavalcade reached the garden of Hafiz Rakhna near Sihrind proper, Akbar was informed that the

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[1] *A'in*, I, p. 40; Blochmann, p. 278.
[2] *MT*, II, p. 326; Lowe, p. 336.
[3] *A'in*, I, p. 141; Blochmann, p. 280.
[4] *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, pp. 60-61.

makhadims had not come to receive him. Akbar then said that he had intended to exalt them, but fortune did not befriend them. Exasperated at their behaviour, he ordered Hafiz Sultan, the *Karori* of the region, to cancel all *madad i-ma'ash* grants and reissue them only to those whose new application received official approval. The five or six who did come to pay homage to the Emperor were rewarded with grants, after consultation with Shaikh Abu'l Fazl. Next day Shaikh Faizi went to Faizi Sihrindi's house and consoled him by saying that the *makhadim* should not lose heart, for the affairs of persons such as Faizi Sihrindi (obviously by that he meant loyal ones) were being handled by Abu'l Fazl and Faizi. God willing, all deserving people would receive due consideration. Faizi Sihrindi accompanied the imperial camp as far as the river Nilab and on the way he discussed his contributions to the *Tafsir Baizawi*[1] with Faizi and Abu'l Fazl. Some other *makhadim* also received favours.[2]

The above incident shows that the situation in the Punjab was more complex than elsewhere in India. The Afghans preferred the *madad-i-ma'ash* to be granted mainly in this area for it was nearer their own homeland. But even under Sher Shah, they had indulged in fraudulent practices and he had to frame laws to prevent them from doing so.[3] The resumption of the Afghans' revenue-free grants, and the transfer and desmissal of the *qazis* of the Punjab, had made the area a hot-bed of sedition. It was Akbar's stay in the Punjab region from 1585 to 1601 which on the one hand gave rise to a change in his North West Frontier policy and external relations in general; and on the other helped in the creation of a new class of *madad i-ma'ash*-holders composed of scholars such as Faizi Sihrindi who enjoyed the confidence of the people of their own area and were not hostile to the imperial policy.

The change in the sort of people who were awarded *madad i-ma'ash*, or stipends, contributed to the development of a new outlook concerning the duties and responsibilities of *sadrs*. It was no longer considered essential to appoint only orthodox Sunni scholars to the post of *sadr*, but the emphasis came to be laid on honesty and readiness and ability to implement the imperial schemes efficiently. Abu'l Fazl says:

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[1] *Anwar al-tanzil wa asrar al-ta'wil*, a recension of the Quranic exegesis by al-Zamakhshari, entitled the *Kashshaf*. The rationalist elements in both works are most controversial.

[2] Faizi Sihrindi, *Akbar Nama*, ff. 161b-162b.

[3] 'Abbas Khan Sarwani, *Tarikh i-Sher Shahi*, p. 226.

> "As the circumstances of men have to be inquired into before grants are made, and their petitions must be considered in fairness, an experienced man of correct intentions is employed for this office. He ought to be at peace with every party, and must be kind towards the people at large in word and action."[1]

Abu'l Fazl concludes the description in the *A'in* 19 of the second book of the *A'in i-Akbari*, entitled *Suyurghals* (the Persian and Central Asian name of the *madad i-ma'ash*), with the remark:

> "His Majesty, with the view of teaching wisdom and promoting true piety, pays much attention to this department, and appoints disinterested men as *sadrs* of the realm and of the provinces *(kul wa juzw)*."[2]

The successors of Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi were men of no ordinary calibre, but their loyal support of Akbar's policy of "peace with all" had made them a target for the attack of Mulla 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni, and of other orthodox Muslim groups.

The first of these was Sultan Khwaja 'Abdu'l-A'zim, popularly known as Sultan Khwaja Naqshbandi, who succeeded Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, belonged to the order of Naqshbandi saints to which Babur and other Mughals had been ardently devoted. In October 1576 Sultan Khwaja was appointed *Amir i-Hajj* (Leader of the party of pilgrims to Mecca) and was given six lakhs of rupees and 12,000 robes to distribute to the deserving people and ascetics there. At the end of December 1578 he returned after having apparently performed his duties there to Akbar's satisfaction. The good impression he thus created led to his appointment as *sadr* in place of Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi.[3] He was not an 'alim but a sufi, and before his death in July 1584 he was able to streamline the administration of the *sadrs'* department, and rose to be a *mansabdar* of 1000.[4]

Fathu'llah Shirazi was a[5] Shi'i, and his successor the Sadr i-Jahan,[6] completely reorientated the department of *sadr*. The association of Abu'l Fazl with the Sadr i-Jahan in the matter of the award of the *madad i-ma'ash* grants led to the introduction of a system of rigorous check and counter-check in the department, of course to the great disappointment of the orthodox.

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[1] *A'in*, I, p. 140; Blochmann, p. 278.

[2] *Ibid* I, p. 141; *Ibid*, p. 280.

[3] *AN*, III, p. 263; Bev, III, p. 382.

[4] Blochmann, p. 466-67.

[5] See *Infra*.

[6] See *Infra*.

The remarkable changes that followed the signing of the *mahzar* were hardly anticipated either by Shaikh Mubarak and his supporters or by the Emperor himself. The document, which is in the main stream of the Perso-Islamic traditions of the Saljuq sultans of Iran rather than, as Dr Peter Hardy seems to think, of the "Classical Islamic period"[1] of the Caliphs, was of far less importance in the long run than the crystallisation, which soon followed in the conditions which it created, of the new elites of the Mughal state. This factor promoted recognition of the need to transform the government into a pattern of harmony. That events could so develop was due not simply to the promulgation of the *mahzar*; it flowed from the fact that the *mahzar*, having put an end to the predominance of the bigoted orthodox, allowed the free development of the generous spirit which Akbar wished to encourage.

[1] P. Hardy's review on U.N. Day, *The Mughal Government* (*Bulletin of SOAS*, University of London, 1972, part 2, p. 438).

CHAPTER 5

THE MUGHAL ELITES IN AKBAR'S REIGN

Akbar's efforts to make the Mughal service broadly based by enlisting the support of all religious and racial groups in the country and by employing talented men from other parts of the Muslim world, produced heterogeneous groups of elite in the imperial service. These vied with one another in gaining power and status, but the evolution of the *mansabdari* system and consequent changes in service conditions made all groups conscious of the need to strengthen their power by unifying and consolidating the resources at their disposal within the service, and by obtaining the support of other groups outside it.

In the first half of Akbar's reign, such groups were based on either race or family and the system was not open, but after 1580 smaller groups, while still retaining their identity or individuality, banded together into larger ones. Their leaders were not always influenced only by family interests or racial or tribal considerations; the political and economic advantages anticipated by the leaders of the groups provided their action with propulsive force, and the same racial or family groups tended to split up into rival parties. Racial and religious sentiments were exploited, but played a very ephemeral role in the formation of alliances.

When Humayun reconquered India, the dominant elite groups on his side were the Begs, Turani nobles belonging to Central Asian tribes. They were proud of having carved out the Indian empire for Babur, but were not unduly worried about losing it. They despised control and discipline; only a strong leader like Babur could canalise their ambitions to his advantage. Brought up in the tradition of the restless nobles of Sultan[1] Abu Sa'id

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[1] Abu Sa'id b. Muhammad b. Miranshah b. Timur started his career of conquest in 1449 and his restless military activity made him theoretically the overlord of Transoxiana, Turkistan (to the confines of Kashghar and of the Dasht i-Qipchaq), Kabulistan, Zabulistan, Khurasan and Mazandaran; but practically his hold was threatened by constant Uzbeg and Mongol in-

Mirza's successors, they changed sides and threw old alliances overboard as convenience dictated. It was because of the restless ambitions innate in his Turani nobles that Humayun, after his reconquest of India, intended to divide his kingdom into several regions and to assign each of these to one of his nobles with an independent army. He did not intend to retain more than 12,000 horsemen under his personal control[1]—an admission of his incapacity to rule a centralised empire.

The other major group was composed of the Iranis, but apart from Bairam Khan none of them enjoyed any prestige or power. Many were Shi'is, and a large number of Sunnis who bore names such as Yar 'Ali (friend of 'Ali), Kashf 'Ali (sandals of 'Ali) and Haidar 'Ali (lion of 'Ali) were suspected of being Shi'is.[2] The Turanis, who were Sunnis, and the Indian Sunnis considered them heretics and despised them.

During his regency, Bairam Khan reasserted the idea of establishing a strong Mughal empire but his efforts to control the Turani pressure groups cost him his power and his office. Akbar allowed himself to be used as a tool by the Turani groups intriguing to get rid of the powerful regent, but he was soon convinced that both the Turani and Irani leadership were unreliable. The Turani leadership was divided into several competing pressure groups but it maintained a facade of unity.[3] Akbar knew the respective strengths of these groups, but he could not rule successfully by playing one against the other and using the Iranis as a counterpoise. Between 1562 and 1567 different Turani leaders

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roads. He settled *suyurghals* (fiefs) on his sons and other important dignitaries in the vain hope of unifying his dominions; but they asserted independent power in their own areas, and in Abu Sa'id's own life time, the central authority began to break up. A Timurid prince executed him in 1469. (*EI*, new, I, pp. 147-48).

[1] *AN*, I, p. 356.

[2] *MT*, I, p. 468. The names of the Prophet, some of his companions, and the members of his family, are adopted very frequently by Sunni Muslims as part of their names. Men called Abu Bakr, 'Umar or 'Usman are always considered Sunnis. An anecdote of Badauni illustrates common sectarian prejudices in this regard. A Sunni king invaded Sabzawar in Iran, well known for Shi'i fanaticism. To the eminent men of the town, gathered before him, the king said that he had attacked them for holding fanatic Shi'i views. They replied that the accusation was false. Thereupon the king ordered them to produce, in support of their contention, anyone by the name of Abu Bakr living in their town. After long search, a miserable-looking man of that

rebelled several times.[1] The revolts were crushed with the help of rival Turani groups and the solid support of the Iranis, but stopped the expansion of the empire.

This convinced Akbar that he should devote his energies to enlisting the support of powerful indigenous groups. The Afghans were still ruling the eastern provinces from Bihar to Bengal: the only other group to fall back upon was the Rajputs.[2] Under the Delhi Sultans, the infantry was largely composed of Hindus. Hindu chiefs assisted the movement of armies and helped the administrative machinery in several other ways. By the time of the Tughluqs, the predominance of Hindu clerks in the revenue

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name was brought forth. The king asked whether nothing better could be found. They replied curtly that the climate of Sabzwar could support no better Abu Bakr (*MT*, III, p. 73; Haig, pp. 117-18). Similarly, any name containing 'Ali is considered a Shi'i name.

[1] Maham Anaga, after the fall of Bairam Khan, intrigued successfully to control the reins of government; but in November 1561, Shamsu'd Din Muhammad Atka Khan was appointed prime minister. This shocked her as well as Mun'im Khan, who considered himself the effective prime minister. (*AN*, I, pp. 149-50). Thus two important groups were formed: Maham Anaga, Mun'im Khan, Shihabu'd Din Ahmad, and Adham Khan, the son of Maham the more powerful, and the less influential circle of Shamsu'd-Din Atka Khan. In May 1562 Adham Khan murdered Shamsu'd Din Muhammad Atka Khan in cold blood; but Akbar at once executed him in person, Maham Anaga, stricken with shame and remorse died on 24 June 1562. All this weakened the dominance of the Turani leadership, but although divided into several factions, the Turanis remained the most powerful political group.

[1] 1562 Mirza Sharafu'd Din's rebellion in Nagaur.
1564 Shah Abu'l Ma'ali's rebellion.
1564 'Abdu'llah Khan's rebellion.
1565-67 'Ali Quli Khan's rebellion.
1566 Rebellion of the Mirzas.

[2] The *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin* records an interesting conversation between Humayun and Shah Tahmasp of Iran:

Shah Tahmasp—Among Indians, which classes command the obedience of numerous tribes, possess princely grandeur and are brave?

Humayun—The Afghans and the Rajputs.

Shab Tahmasp—You cannot win the friendship of the Afghans; expel them from military service and force them to become merchants and artisans. Establish close relations with the Rajputs and promote them, for it is not possible to rule India without controlling the *zamindars*.

departments had become hateful to the Muslim elite;[1] and Hindu control over revenue and finances in the reigns of the Afghans was highly irritating to Muslim grandees and religious leaders. Muhammad bin Tughluq had appointed a Hindu as the governor of Sihwan in Sind but the local Muslims rebelled and put him to death.[2]

Before Akbar's accession to the throne, Hemu had seized Delhi and assumed the title of Vikramaditya. He was originally a Hindu grain merchant of Rewari and through his ability he rose to power in the reign of Muhammad 'Adil Sur (1554-56) and defeated the rivals of his master in no less than twenty battles. His rise was meteoric but he possessed no independent support. His tools were the Afghans[3] whom he controlled through tact and cunning diplomacy.[4]

The Rajputs, on the other hand, controlled formidable contingents of their own. To employ them effectively on terms acceptable to the state as well as to themselves needed an Akbar, open-minded and ready to adjust to change.

Bhar Mal Kachwaha, the Raja of Amber destined to become the pioneer of the new policy, was introduced to Akbar in the first year of his reign by Majnun Khan Qaqshal, the governor of Narnol.[5] When Humayun died, Hajji Khan, an eminent slave of Sher Shah's had besieged the fort of Narnol but on the intercession of Raja Bhar Mal, he allowed Majnun Khan to leave the fort and go to Akbar's court. After presenting robes of honour to Bhar Mal, Akbar, as was his wont, deliberately mounted an elephant which was in an excitable state, to demonstrate his power over such animals.[6] The courtiers, in terror, scattered, Bhar Mal alone stood his ground, and Akbar was mightily impressed.[7]

In 1562 Muhammad Sharafu'd Din Husain Mirza, the governor of Mewat, had enlisted the support of Raja Bhar Mal's nephew to annihilate his uncle. The Raja's supporters reported the matter

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Zakhiratu'l Khawanin, pp. 103-04. The anecdote is tendentious and reflects the later understanding of the Mughal politics.

[1] *I'jaz i-Khusrawi*; extracts by Prof. S. Hasan 'Askari in *Medieval India: A Miscellany*, I (Bombay, 1969), p. 9.

[2] *Rehla*, p. 106. [3] *MT*, II, p. 15; Lowe, p. 8. [4] *MT*, I, p. 30.

[5] *AN*, II, p. 20; Bev, II, p. 36.

[6] *Ibid*, 71-75; *Ibid*, pp. 111-16.

[7] *Ibid*, pp. 44-45; *Ibid*, p. 70.

to Akbar as he was on pilgrimage to Ajmer. At Sanganir, the Raja and his relations were brought before the Emperor. Abu'l Fazl says that Akbar's kindness towards the Raja prompted him "to bring himself out of the ruck of *zamindars* and make himself one of the distinguished men of the Court." The Emperor accepted Bhar Mal's offer to marry his eldest daughter. After his return from Ajmer, Akbar stayed at Sambhar for a day and the marriage was performed with great pomp and show[1]; but whether with Hindu or Muslim rites is unknown. Perhaps something similar to Prince Salim's marriage would have taken place:[2] a *qazi* might have recited the *khutbah* in an open court, while in the palace some of the Hindu ceremonies might have been secretly performed. All Rajput princesses who married into the imperial family, beginning with Bhar Mal's daughter, kept up their Hindu religious observances in the harem throughout their lives.[3] Unlike the earlier marriages of Muslims with Hindus, these marriages were not forced, but were arranged by the fathers of the girls in the traditional manner—a significant departure from earlier practices. The 'ulama, then at the height of their power and pride, probably did not trouble themselves about the innovation. Many privileges reserved for *ahl i-kitab* (Jews and Christians) had been granted to the Hindus in previous centuries, and the 'ulama therefore acquiesced in this matter too.

About this time, Bir Bal,[4] a brahman, and Todar Mal,[5] a khattri, entered the imperial service. Thereafter the doors of the Mughal service were quickly opened to all clans and castes of

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[1] *AN*, II, pp. 155-57; Bev, II, pp. 240-41.

[2] Badauni says that Prince Salim married the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das in accordance with the secular regulations. He himself went to the Raja's house and the marriage (*aqd*) was concluded in the presence of *qazis* and *ashraf* (probably Saiyids). Two krors of *tankahs* (about one lakh of silver rupees) was fixed as the marriage portion. They performed all the ceremonies customary among the Hindus, such as lighting the fire etc. Although Badauni does not make it clear, his account shows that the '*aqd* was performed before the *qazis* and other Muslim notables, and the Hindu ceremonies were held inside the palace according to the usual Hindu custom.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 261; Lowe, p. 269.

[4] His original name was Mahesh Das; he first received the title of Kab Rai (Sanskrt Kaviraj, Prince of Poets), and afterwards that of Raja Bir Bar (Sanskrit Vira-Vara; commonly known as Birbal—Brave hero) *MT*, II, p. 161; Lowe, p. 164.

[5] Blochmann, pp. 376-78.

Hindus. The *mansabdars* belonged to the high caste alone but such men as Daswanth, a potter, were also welcome additions to the Mughal service[1] as artists and handlers of animals.

What changed the complexion of the Mughal governing classes further, was the admission of indigenous Muslim groups. Although given the general designation of Indian Muslims, or simply Shaikhzadas, the pattern of their grouping was more complex than any such general term would suggest. Its analysis would clarify understanding of the nature of the Muslim elite in Akbar's reign and the sort of society that evolved with the help of their participation.

The experiment was not new. Men from religious families had held high posts in the department of the *sadrs*, where they controlled the education of Muslims and the administration of charities. Saiyids, who claimed to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, obtained preference in all non-military posts. In the reign of the Khaljis, they exercised a predominant influence over the region extending from the Punjab to Avadh.[2] Muhammad bin Tughluq, for example, appointed them as governors. Saiyid Ahsan Shah of Kaithal,[3] (north-west of Delhi), was appointed governor of Ma'bar (Madura), and Saiyid Ibrahim[4] was appointed governor of Hansi and Sirsa in the Punjab. Both of them rebelled, resulting in the loss of Ma'bar[5] in 1334 in a general rebellion and unrest in the Eastern Punjab. Firuz Shah Tughluq's liberal grants of *madad i-ma'ash* and administrative *iqta's* to Saiyids and other holy men[6] made them petty chiefs in their own areas, somewhat similar to the Hindu rajas. A dynasty of the Saiyids ruled Delhi from 1414 to 1451. They were weak kings, but other Saiyids could not help realising that a military career promised both prestige and power. The Afghan rulers encouraged holy men from their own homeland to settle down in India and gave them liberal *madad i-ma'ash* grants, but this did not undermine the importance of the indigenous groups of Saiyids and holy men. A considerable number of compact areas came under their control where they exercised influence similar to that of the Hindu chiefs.

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[1] Blochmann, p. 114. [2] Barani, pp. 348-50.

[3] Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, pp. 243-44; Barani, pp. 480-81.

[4] *MT*, I, pp. 231-32.

[5] The earliest known coin of Sultan Jalalu'd Din Ahsan Shah is dated 735/1334 and was struck at Madura, *JRAS*, 1909, p. 671.

[6] 'Afif, *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 94-100, 129-31, 136.

Some Saiyids of Barha joined the Afghan service. Saiyid Mahmud of Barha, for example, was a noble in the court of Sultan Sikandar Sur;[1] whom he deserted in 1557 at Mankot to enter Akbar's service. He was friendly with Bairam Khan and served with distinction in the early campaigns of Akbar's reign.[2] After Bairam's fall he obtained a *jagir* near Delhi and performed great feats of courage and bravery in all battles in which he fought.[3] The list of the *mansabdars* in the *A'in i-Akbari* mentions nine Saiyids of Barha who were related to each other.[4] They formed a very closely-knit group, and their contingents were led mainly by their kinsfolk and dependents.

Their claim of descent from the Prophet was doubted and they were never able to prove it satisfactorily.[5] Jahangir thought that the best proof of the truth of their lineage was their chivalry.[6] Their manners were crude and in speech they were outspoken. They were proud of being Hindustanis and led the Mughal van in battle-fields.[7]

Saiyids from Amroha, Bilgram, Manikpur, and other towns joined the military service,[8] but they formed groups of minor importance. The Barha Saiyids were Shi'is as were those of Amroha, Bilgram and Manikpur.

Several important groups of Sunni Saiyids were also attracted to Akbar's service. They were descendants of eminent *sufis* and were known as Shaikhzadas. Of these, the group led by Shaikh Muhammad Bukhari and his nephew Shaikh Farid Bukhari was most prominent. They combined the efficiency and heroic virtues of military leaders with the shrewdness of politicians. Shaikh

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 17; Lowe, p. 11.

[2] *AN*, II, pp. 46, 66, 78; Bev, II, pp. 72, 103, 120.

[3] *AN*, II, pp. 174, 372; III, pp. 22-23, 43, 47, 57, 77; Bev, II, pp. 269, 540; III, 16, 61, 81, 108.

[4] Saiyid Mahmud (*mansab* 2,000), his brother Saiyid Ahmad (*mansab* 2,000), his two sons Saiyid Qasim (*mansab* 1,500) and Saiyid Hashim (*mansab* 900), Saiyid Raju (*mansab* 900), Saiyid Jamalu'd Din, son of Saiyid Ahmad (*mansab* 500), Saiyid Chajhjhu (*mansab* 500), Saiyid Bayazid (*mansab* 500), and Saiyid Lad (*mansab* 250).

[5] Blochmann, pp. 424-25.

[6] *Tuzuk*, p. 366. According to Jahangir, Barha is derived from *barah* or twelve villages close to one another in the upper *doab*, to which they belonged. These villages are in the modern Muzaffarnagar district, in the north-western U. P.

[7] *Tuzuk*, p. 30.

[8] Blochmann; pp. 424, 426.

Muhammad successfully persuaded the Afghan Fattu Khasa Khail to surrender Chunar to Akbar,[1] and in 1569 took part in the siege of Ranthambor.[2] He drew Akbar's attention to the saintly character of Shaikh Salim Chishti of Sikri,[3] and after the birth of Prince Salim at the end of August 1569 he became very influential. Akbar liked him both for his ability and loyalty.

Akbar's regular visits to the tomb of Khwaja Mu'inu'd Din Chishti and the distribution of largesse there had made the trusteeship of the shrine very lucrative. Shaikh Husain, the trustee at that time claimed that he was a direct descendant of the Khwaja; his rivals contested the assertion. Early in 1570 the dispute was laid before Akbar, then visiting the shrine. Enquiries did not substantiate the Shaikh's claim;[4] but Akbar, instead of replacing him by a rival, appointed Shaikh Muhammad Bukhari as a trustee.[5] He ordered him to streamline the administration of charities and pay more attention to the erection of mosques and *khanqahs* there.[6] The Shaikh himself was given a *jagir* in that area, but not long after (in 1573) he was killed in a battle against Husain Mirza of Gujarat during which the Bukhari Saiyids exhibited great valour.[7]

Akbar did not give up his control over the appointment of a trustee to the tomb of Khwaja Mu'inu'd Din, a post then and later coveted by a number of holy men.

Shaikh Farid Bukhari had entered Akbar's service at an early age. In January 1578, the Emperor appointed him to enquire into allegations against Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi's mismanagement of *madad i-ma'ash* grants.[8] In 1580-81 he played a prominent role in the suppression of the rebellions of Bihar and Bengal.[9] His rise in Akbar's reign was steady and his loyal services to Jahangir made him that Emperor's favourite.[10]

Some of Shaikh Salim Chishti's descendants, too, joined Akbar's service. Most important among them was Shaikh Ibrahim whose father, Shaikh Musa, was an elder brother of Shaikh Salim.[1] In June 1576 he took part in the battle against Maharana Pratap and in 1583-84 served under Mirza 'Aziz Koka in Bihar and Bengal.[2] In 1585, Akbar appointed him the governor of Agra, which post he held until his death on 14 August 1591. His loyalty to Akbar was regarded by Mulla 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni as Shaikh Ibrahim's greatest sin; he composed curses phrased in chronograms such as "base of disposition" and "vile Shaikh."[3]

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[1] *AN*, II, p. 150; Bev, II, p. 232.

[2] *Zubdatu't Tawarikh*, f. 13b; *AN*, II, p. 334; Bev, II, p. 489.

[3] *AN*, II, pp. 343-44; Bev, II, pp. 502-3.

[4] *FS*, f. 47a.

[5] *AN*, II, pp. 350-51; Bev, II, p. 511.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *FS*, ff. 64a-68b.

[8] *AN*, III, p. 234; Bev, III, p. 331.

[9] *Ibid*, p. 325; *Ibid*, p. 476; *FS*, pp. 132a-36b.

[10] *Tuzuk*, p. 6.

Shaikh Ahmad (died 1577),[4] the second son of Shaikh Salim, rose to a *mansab* of 500. Shaikh Bayazid,[5] the son of Shaikh Ahmad whose mother was first to give milk to Prince Salim, is mentioned in the *A'in i-Akbari* as a *mansabdar* of 400. Jahangir awarded him the title of Mu'azzam Khan,[6] and in the third year of his reign promoted him to a *mansab* of 4000. Shaikh Kabir, a relation of Shaikh Salim is included in the list of *mansabdars* of 200 in the *A'in i-Akbari*.[7] After his accession Jahangir promoted him to the rank of 1000 and gave the title of Shuja'at Khan.

The rise of Shaikh Salim's grandsons and an unending governorship which they enjoyed in the reign of Jahangir was not only a recognition of their close connection with the Emperor, but a reward for the support they gave in his rebellion. Already before Akbar's reign had closed, their alliances with the new elite had opened a broad field to their influence. Badauni contemptuously described them in popular idiom as the Sikriwals (belonging to Sikri).

Among the holy men of Awadh most loyal to Akbar, were Miran Sadr i-Jahan and Shaikh 'Abdu'r Rahim, both very influential, both addicted to drink, and both deeply attached to their brahman wives, whom they had obviously chosen themselves.

Sadr i-Jahan was born in Pihani, now in Hardo'i district near Lucknow. He was a descendant of Mir Saiyid Ahmad Manjhle,[8] an eminent 'alim who flourished at Qanauj in Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi's reign (1402-37). He was a favourite student of Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, who made him a *mufti*.[1] In 1585 Akbar sent him in advance to Kabul to pacify its leaders who were planning to surrender to 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg.[2] In August 1586, he was sent on an embassy to 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg,[3] where he performed the difficult task of convincing the Khan of the Emperors' sincerity in Islam. After his return from Turan he was appointed *sadr* and remained a life-long supporter of the Emperor. He performed several important diplomatic assignments.[4] Jahangir promoted him from a *mansab* of 2000 to 4000 because of their earlier friendship when both were students under Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi; Sadr i-Jahan being senior to Prince Salim.[5]

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[1] *AN*, III, pp. 43, 220, 236, 279; Bev, III, pp. 62, 309, 337; 407.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 231; Lowe, p. 236.

[3] *MT*, II, pp. 374-75; Lowe, p. 387.

[4] Blochmann, p. 530; *AN*, III, pp. 44, 90, 213.

[5] Blochmann, p. 552.

[6] *Tuzuk*, p. 32 promoted; p. 79 given the little of Mu'zzam Khan; p. 137 governor of Delhi.

[7] Blochmann, p. 585.

[8] 'Abdu'r Rahman Chishti, *Mir'atu'l Asrar* (Rieu, I, p. 359 b), ff. 452a-b.

The *A'in i-Akabri* includes Shaikh 'Abdu'r Rahim among the *mansabdars* of 700. At the end of 1585, in a fit of insanity such as he occasionally suffered, he wounded himself with a dagger, but the wound was not mortal and he recovered.[6] After his death his brahman wife Kishna built a tomb for him in Lucknow, laid out gardens, and had villas built where she entertained all imperial officers and soldiers who passed through Lucknow.[7] The town remained under the control of Shaikh 'Abdu'r Rahim's descendants until Sa'adat Khan Burhanu'l Mulk, the founder of the dynasty of the Nauwabs of Awadh, took it from them after 1722.

The success of the matrimonial alliances with the Rajputs seems to have prompted Akbar to establish similar alliances with the prominent Muslim families of Delhi and Agra. In this he was badly advised by certain holy men of Agra and the mishandling of the situation by professional intermediaries precipitated a crisis. In 1564 an attempt on his life in Delhi alarmed the Emperor and he gave up the idea of establishing matrimonial alliances with the Muslim families.[58] However, his marriage with Bibi Gauhar Khanam, the sister of Shaikh Jamal Bakhtiyar who had a considerable following in Jalesar and Chandwar, near Agra, was very successful.[9] Akbar promoted her brother Shaikh Jamal to the

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[1] *MT*, III, p. 141; Lowe, p. 199. [2] *AN*, III, p. 468; Bev, III, p. 705.

[3] *AN*, III, p. 497; Bev, III, p. 753.

[4] He was sent as an envoy to Bahadur of Khandesh. *AN*, III, p. 767.

[5] *Tuzuk*, p. 9. [6] *AN*, III, p. 470; Bev, III, p. 707.

[7] Blochmann, p. 524. [8] *AN*, II, pp. 200-03; Bev, II, pp. 312-15.

[9] *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin*, p. 247.

mansab of 1000. He was no soldier and was given to hard drinking,[1] but his prestige as a Shaikhzada was an asset to the Emperor. He died in 1585.

Shaikh 'Abdu'llah,[2] a son of the celebrated Shattari saint Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus entered Akbar's service too and the *A'in i-Akbari* includes him among the *mansabdars* of 900. Another notable newcomer was Shaikh Musa, the son of Shaikh Hamid Qadiri of Multan. After his father's death, Shaikh Musa quarrelled for some time with his brother Shaikh 'Abdu'l Qadir over the succession, but ultimately joined Akbar's service and, according to Badauni, was raised to a *mansab*[3] of 500. Hisn ame isn ot in the list of the *mansabdars* in the *A'in i-Akbari*, but Badauni's statement is categorical and it must be recalled that Abu'l Fazl's list in the *A'in* is incomplete, his own name, for instance, is omitted, there is no explanation for Abu'l Fazl's omission either. Shaikh 'Abdu'l-Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi speaks very highly of Shaikh Musa's piety and considers him a renovator of Islam and an annihilator of *kufr*[4] (infidelity).

Many other Shaikhzadas who did not find their *madad i-ma'ash* grants sufficient, and those who were more ambitious, joined the imperial service. The highhandedness of Akbar's early *sadrs* disgusted a good number of them. Mir Saiyid Muhammad, the *mir 'adl*, had even advised Badauni not to bother about the *madad i-ma'ash*, for the behaviour of the *sadrs* was appalling, but to become a *mansabdar* in earnest.[5] Badauni did not accept the advice, but others did not resist the prospect of improving their status by the authority and affluence which the imperial service offered. The policy filled the service with local Muslim elite. The Shaikhzadas and the Saiyids were able to recruit efficient horsemen from the areas under their influence without much difficulty. Badauni, for example, says that among the holy men who were his contemporaries, there were such leaders as Shaikh Kabir in Multan, who could assemble a thousand horsemen in a day.[6]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 470; Bev, III, p. 707.

[2] Blochmann, p. 509.

[3] *MT*, III, p. 92.

[4] *AA*, p. 315. The Shaikh became his disciple in 1577.

[5] *MT*, III, p. 76; Haig, p. 121.

[6] *MT*, III, p. 93; Haig, p. 143. He was one of the spiritual successors of Shaikh Baha'u'd Din Zakariya.

Another group of influential Muslims attracted to Akbar's service was formed by the Kambohs. They were essentially a community of Punjab merchants, friendly to the Afghans with whom they had common ties of commercial interests. In the reign of the Lodis, they began to enter the government service. 'Umar Khan Kamboh,[1] the father-in-law of Miyan Shaikh Ladan, was Sikandar Lodi's *amir akhur*.[2] Another prominent Kambon in the service of Sultan Sikandar was Taju'd Din.[3] However, in the reign of Ibrahim Lodi, Kamal Khan Kamboh rebelled.[4] Shaikh Jamali Kamboh, the saint and poet, was a favourite of both the Lodis and the Mughals.[5]

In Akbar's reign the Kambohs became prominent because of the distinguished achievements of Shahru'llah, later known as Shahbaz Khan. In his early youth he had led an ascetic life, but later on he gave it up and joined the imperial service as a junior officer in the department of *kotwal*.[6] In 1571 he was appointed a *bakhshi* and a year later was awarded the title of Shahbaz Khan.[7] In 1574 he recommended the introduction of the rule for the branding of horses (dagh), a system based on the pattern of the military reforms of 'Ala'u'd Din Khalji and Sher Shah. Akbar approved and Raja Todar Mal supported it enthusiastically.[8] The Turani grandees with Mirza 'Aziz Koka as their mouthpiece opposed it, however, Akbar introduced it in the teeth of their opposition, and the reform was one of the major factors contributing to the efficiency of the Mughal army and the foundation of the *mansabdari* system. In 1578 Shahbaz Khan conquered several of Maharana Pratap's forts,[9] and rendered excellent

[1] *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi*, p. 46.

[2] *Amir Akhur* or *Akhurbek* was the title of the superintendent of the royal horses, one of the most eminent household officers of the Delhi sultans.

[3] *Tabaqat i-Akbari*, I, p. 328.

[4] *WM*, p. 82.

[5] Hamid bin Fazlu'llah, known as Darwesh Jamali or Jamali Kamboh of Delhi, was also a great traveller. He visited Mecca and Medina, the Yemen, North Africa, Palestine, Turkey, Syria, Arab and Persian Iraq, Azarbayjan, Gilan, Mazandaran, and Khurasan. He met Nuru'd Din 'Abdu'r Rahman Jami in *c.*1492. He died on 1 May 1536, while one of Humayun's entourage in Gujarat.

[6] *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin*, p. 149.

[7] *MT*, II, pp. 173, 190-91; Lowe, pp. 176, 193-94.

[8] *AN*, III, pp. 68-69; Bev, II, pp. 94-95.

[9] *AN*, III, pp. 238-39; Bev, III, pp. 339-42.

service in suppressing the Bihar and Bengal rebellion[1] of 1580-81. In order to conciliate the officers and soldiers during the Emperor's absence at Kabul, he gave them *jagirs* in Bengal, Bihar and elsewhere on his own initiative.[2] His strident self-assertiveness obstructed his promotion, however, and he did not rise above a *mansab* of 2000. He was an orthodox Sunni who performed his prayers regularly, and did not have the word *murid* (disciple) engraved on his[3] ring. He died in 1599.

Abu'l Fazl says that, "He had few equals in any kind of service, and in the management of troops. If he had given up bigotry and had controlled his tongue, he would have possessed the embroidery of wisdom."[4] Blochmann is right in saying: "His Sunni zeal, no doubt, retarded his promotion as much as his arrogance; for other less deserving officers held higher commands."[5]

Akbar preferred to extend his empire with as little bloodshed and loss of human life as he could. No invasion was undertaken without the minutest information being obtained about the topography and internal administration of the land to be conquered. His envoys to the independent regional rulers invariably sought to impress upon the elite there that loyalty to Akbar was worth more to them than fidelity to their own rulers.[6] Won over by the inducements of the Mughal agents, the local elite prepared the ground for the easy conquest of the area, by either deserting their own rulers or by persuading them to surrender. In each case their influence facilitated the subsequent consolidation of Mughal power in the newly-conquered regions. The local sufis, Saiyids, 'ulama, scholars and poets, by competing to gain the Emperor's patronage, helped to make the introduction of the Mughal administrative machinery easy and peaceful in the areas annexed to the empire.

The 'ulama of Gujarat were encouraged by Akbar to believe that after his conquest of the territory he would uproot the

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 314; *MT*, II, p. 285; Lowe, p. 293.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 296, Lowe, p. 305.

[3] *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin*, p. 160.

[4] *AN*, III, p. 764; Bev, p. 1142. [5] Blochmann, p. 439.

[6] The alliance of Shaikh Ya'qub Sarafi and Zuhuri are cases in point. Even Shaikh Fazlu' llah preferred to act as the Emperor's envoy to Bahadur, the ruler of Asir.

Mahdawis and restore orthodox Sunnism.[1] Among the nobles of Sultan Muzaffar of Gujarat, the most friendly to Akbar were Mir Saiyid Hamid Bukhari and Mir Abu Turab Wali.

Saiyid Hamid was a descendant of Makhdum Jahaniyan Saiyid Jalal Bukhari (1300-84). Saiyid Mubarak, the grandfather of Saiyid Hamid, entered the service of the Sultans of Gujarat and was made a nobleman.[2] The father of Saiyid Hamid held high posts, and Saiyid Hamid himself ruled Dhanduqa and Dhulqa under Sultan Muzaffar who was king in name only.[3] Saiyid Hamid, along with Mir Abu Turab Wali and some other notables, became instrumental in the surrender of Gujarat to Akbar in November 1572. Saiyid Hamid joined the Mughal army deputed to fight against the Mirzas and at the end of March 1573, when the Emperor left Gujarat, he assigned Dhanduqa and Dhulqa to the Saiyid.[4] In September 1577 he was appointed governor of Multan.[5] Later on a *jagir* in Peshawar was assigned to him and he was ordered to keep the road to Kabul clear of the Afghan tribesmen who plundered the caravans. He served in the army sent to restore order in Baluchistan.[6] In November 1586 he died fighting against Jalala Roshana'i, who had attacked the Bikram fort.[7] His mansab was 2000. His son, Saiyid Kamal, rose to a rank of 700 in Akbar's service, and Jahangir, on his accession, made him governor of Delhi;[8] his descendants continued to obtain *mansabs* until Shah Jahan's reign.

The ancestors of Mir Abu Turab belonged to Shiraz; his grandfather, Ghiyasu'd Din, had migrated to Gujarat in the reign of Shah Isma'il Safavi (1501-24). The family was held in great respect both as Saiyids and leaders of eminence. Abu Turab was the principal adviser of the Sultans of Gujarat.[9] From the time of Akbar's conquest of Gujarat to his death, Abu Turab remained a pillar of strength to Akbar, who used to consult him on such important matters as the appointment of governors of Gujarat.[1] In 1577 he was appointed the leader of the party sent on pilgrimage to Mecca, whence he returned with the stone believed to bear marks of the footprint of the Prophet. Akbar allowed him to take it back to Gujarat where in 1585 he erected a mosque and a separate edifice in which to preserve both the footprint and an alleged hair of the Prophet's which he possessed.[2] He held no high office, but performed several important diplomatic assignments, particularly in Junagarh.[3] His son Mir Gada'i rose to a *mansab*[4] of 700/400.

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[1] *Nafa'isu'l Ma'asir* (Rampur Ms), f. 201 b.
[2] Blochmann, pp. 433-35.
[3] *AN*, II, pp. 369-70; Bev, II, p. 537.
[4] *AN*, III, pp. 11-12; Bev, III, pp. 15-16.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 33; *Ibid*, pp. 40-41.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 213; *Ibid*, p. 300.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 367; *Ibid*, p. 539.
[8] *Ibid*, p. 510; *Ibid*, p. 778.
[9] Blochmann, p. 434.
[10] *AN*, III, pp. 217-18; Bev, III, pp. 305-06.

Among the elite of Sind who faithfully supported Akbar, the most distinguished was Saiyid Nizamu'd Din Mir Ma'sum Nami. His ancestors had been the trustees of the tomb of celebrated Baba Sher Qalandar in Qandahar.[5] From there the family migrated to Bhakkar, but in 1570-71 Ma'sum settled in Gujarat, and later on joined the Mughal service.[6] His interest in historiography led to a friendship with Nizamu'd Din Ahmad *Bakhshi.*[7] At Lahore, in 1590 Ma'sum was presented to Akbar, who made him a *mansabdar* and gave him a *jaqir* in Bhakkar[8] He fought against Jani Beg of Thatta and later accompanied Akbar on his Asirgarh campaign. In 1601-02 he was sent as an envoy to Iran.[9]

Among the elite of Kashmir who facilitated its annexation by the Mughal empire, the most prominent was Shaikh Ya'qub, an eminent scholar and a widely travelled[10] man. He studied *hadis* in the school of Ibn Hajar at Mecca, was the author of several works on *hadis* and sufism, had written a commentary on the *Qur'an* and was also a poet.[11] Both in India and in Kashmir, he enjoyed a good following. Humayun was highly impressed by him[12] and he joined Akbar's court in the early years of the

[1] Mir Abu Turab Wali, *Tarikh-i-Gujarat* (Calcutta, 1909), pp. 56, 58, 66, 87-88, 95-96. [2] *Ibid*, pp. 97-9.

[3] *AN*, III, pp. 490-91, 597; Bev, III, pp. 742-43, 910.

[4] Blochmann, pp. 569-70.

[5] *Tarikh i-Ma'sumi* (Poona, 1938), p. 3, 137-40, 198.

[6] *Ibid*, p. 250.

[7] *Ma'asiru'l 'Umara*, III, pp. 326-27.

[8] *Tarikh i-Ma'sumi*, pp. 250-51.

[9] *AN*, III, p. 825; Bev, III, p. 1236.

[10] *MT*, III, p. 142; Haig, p. 200.

[11] *MT*, III, pp. 142-43; Haig, pp. 200-02.

[12] *MT*, III, p. 142; Haig, p. 201.

latter's reign.[1] In 1582, Akbar sent him as his envoy to the ruler of Kashmir.[2] His influence made many important groups of Kashmiris friendly to Akbar, which greatly helped the annexation of Kashmir in 1586.[3]

On the basis of the *Tamhidat* of 'Anu'l-quzat Hamadani (d. 1123-04) Shaikh-Ya'qub supported the theory that Akbar was an *Insan i-Kamil.*[4] He was intimate with Faizi as well as with Badauni, and wrote an eulogium on Faizi's commentary on the *Qur'an.*[5] About 1594 he left Lahore for Kashmir and wrote two letters to Badauni: one after crossing the Ravi, in which he equated Badauni with Jalalu'd din Dauwani;[6] and the other from Kashmir.[7] On 25 July 1595 the Shaikh died. The chronogram "He was the Shaikh of nations" gives the date of his death.[8] Among the supporters of Akbar's scheme, Shaikh Ya'qub was one of the few exceptions, whom Badauni does not denounce. Perhaps the Shaikh's last letters of flattery wrought the magic.

Soon after their coming to the Court the Gilani brothers[9] became the leaders of the Irani elite. Their *mansab* was not high, but it was the fact that they enjoyed the Emperor's confidence which had made them influential. The ablest Irani in financial and revenue administration was Shah Mansur, but his strict implementation of the policies of Akbar estranged him from a large proportion of the Mughal grandees. Their foul intrigues against him on the occasion of Mirza Hakim's rebellion culminated in his execution[1] on 28 February 1581, and even the recommendations of Hakim Abu'l Fath Gilani[2] and the indirect support of Shaikh Abu'l Fazl could not save the life of the loyal minister. Father Monserrate, who was present in the Imperial camp near Shahabad when Shah Mansur was executed, says that the news was received "with loud acclamation".[3] When Shah Mansur's innocence became clear, Akbar deeply lamented the loss and used to say, "From that day the market of accounts was flat and the thread of accountancy dropped.[4]

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[1] He is first mentioned by Badauni in connection with a discussion in the 'Ibadat Khana under the year 986/1578-79 (*MT*, II, p. 259; Lowe, p. 266).

[2] *AN*, III, pp. 389-90. [3] *Ibid*, p. 496.

[4] Professor 'Aziz Ahmad says, "Iranian dualism was introduced to Akbar as it had been absorbed into heterodox Sufism, by Shaikh Ya'qub Kashmiri, who strangely enough was the same mystic who initiated Akbar's religious antithesis Shaykh Ahmad Sehrindi into the isolationist Muslim political thought of Sayid 'Ali Hamadani: *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (p. 170). This opinion appears to be based on the *Rud i-Kausar* of S.M. Ikram, which contains an erroneous appreciation of Mu Saiyid 'Ali Hamadani. Saiyid 'Ali's political ideas are far from isolationist, he advocateel a struggle to ensure that orthodox Sunnism dominated the whole world. A perusal of *Zakhiratu'l Muluk* will make this clear. The words of Shaikh Ya'qub, as quoted by Badauni have nothing to do with "Iranian dualism." They draw upon the sufi works of Ibn 'Arabi, especially *Fususu'l Hikam*, and the writings of 'Ainu'l Quzat Hamadani. It should be superfluous to add, that "Iranian dualism" has no place in the views of these men, which are founded on *wahdatu'l wujud.*

[5] *MT*, II, p. 393; Lowe, p. 407.

[6] See *Supra.*

[7] *MT*, III, pp. 143-44; Haig, pp. 201-02.

[8] *MT*, III, p. 147; Haig, p. 208.

[9] See *Supra.*

The most outstanding Irani intellectual at Akbar's court was Mir Fathu'llah Shirazi. He first immigrated to the court of 'Adil Shah of Bijapur, but in 1582 moved to Akbar's Court[5] and became the spearhead of all the intellectual movements there. Excellent in all branches of philosophy, he was an eminent authority on Avicenna's works and Ishraqi theosophy. In mathematics, astronomy and mechanics he was unqiue both in Iran and in India.[6] Many reforms were suggested by him; Abu'l Fazl mentions the changes in the currency, and the introduction of the solar Ilahi calendar.[7]

In 1585-86 Mir Fathu'llah Shirazi was appointed as the *sadr* of the empire. During his tenure of office the rules of succession for *madad i-ma'ash* holders were made more stringent and the *sadr* could not grant more than 15 *bighas* of land without the Emperor's permission. The grantees began to lay out orchards on their holdings.[8] The scheme was launched in the face of economic pressure but gradualy became instrumental in the development of a new category of Muslim agricultural property which survived all vicissitudes and upheavals of governments and administration.

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 343; Bev, III, pp. 503-05.
[2] *Ruq'at Hakim Abu'l Fath Gilani* (Lahore, 1968), p. 14.
[3] *The Commentary*, pp. 64-70, 98-99.
[4] *AN*, III, p. 344; Bev, III, p. 504.
[5] *Ibid*, pp. 391, 401; *Ibid*, pp. 578, 593.
[6] *MT*, III, p. 154; Bev, III, p. 216.
[7] Blochmann, p. 34; Jarret, II, pp. 29-30.
[8] *A'in*, I, p. 141; Blochmann, p. 280.

In the year Mir was made the *sadr*, he was awarded the title of 'Azdu'd aula (arm of the empire) and was appointed ambassador to Raja 'Ali Khan of Khandesh.[1] Later he served on a mission to restore order in Gujarat.[2] Mir's involvement with other duties prompted Badauni to denounce both Mir Fathu'llah and the office of *sadr*, alleging that grants had become scarce, *madad i-ma'ash* lands were in a state of ruin, *sadrs* had no work to do and Fathu'llah could not even grant five *bighas* of land.[3]

Fathu'llah Shirazi died in 1589, while Akbar was on tour in Srinagar in Kashmir. The entire camp went into mourning. To Shaikh Faizi and Abu'l Fazl, it was a personal loss. Faizi wrote a touching elegy.[4] Akbar paid tribute in a manner reminiscent of the story in St. Matthew's Gospel xiii, 46. He remarked that the Mir was his *wakil*, philosopher, physician and astronomer and added:

> "Had he fallen into the hands of the Franks, and they had demanded all my treasures in exchange for him, I should have gladly entered upon such profitable traffic, and have bought that precious jewel cheap."[5]

The admission of new elite groups to Akbar's court did not mean that the Afghans were completely relegated to the background. Salim Khan Kakar, an Afghan chief, fought in many battles,[6] took part in the war against the Rawshana'i Afghans and was ultimately raised to the rank of 1,000. In 1570-71 Baz Bahadur[7] himself joined the Mughal service.[8] Muhammad Niyazi, another Afghan, was a *mansabdar* of 500 under Akbar[9] and rose to the rank of 2,000 under Jahangir.[10] The most promising of the young Afghans at the end of Akbar's reign was Pir Khan or Piru Lodi to whom Jahangir later awarded the title of Khan Jahan Lodi.[11]

Akbar's policy of making the Mughal service broadly based reduced the preponderance of the Turanis; nevertheless their number did not fall below one-third of the total *mansabdars*.[1] There were no intellectuals of high calibre among them and they were poorly represented in the class of poets, scholars, and other educated elite. The most highly educated Turani noble was Mirza 'Aziz Koka.

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 465; Bev, III, p. 701.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 489; *Ibid*, p. 740.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 343; Lowe, p. 354.

[4] *Kulliyat i-Faizi* (Lahore, 1967), pp. 66-73.

[5] *AN*, III, p. 558; Bev, III, p. 848.

[6] Blochmann, p. 482.

[7] Baz Bahadur, son of Shuja'at Khan Sur, was the ruler of Malwa; one of his queens Rupmati was well known for her charm and beauty (*AN*, II, p. 137).

[8] Blochmann, p. 473.

[9] Blochmann, pp. 540-41

[10] *Ibid*, p. 540.

[11] *Ibid*, p. 565.

Until 1579 the Sunni character of the Mughal administrative framework did not change. The abolition of *jizyah* and the tax on Hindu pilgrims, and Akbar's matrimonial alliances were political measures. The annexation of the Rajput states was reckoned as a triumph of Islam and the Hindu chiefs were regarded as "*kafirs* obedient to Islam."[2]

The divergence in the attitudes of different racial and religious groups is best exemplified in the Mughal campaign of 1575 under Raja Man Singh, against Maharana Pratap. To Akbar it was a war against a powerful Rajput chief who, in collaboration with an Afghan chief, Hakim Sur[3], was a potent threat to his power. To the Kachwahas, it was an occasion to exhibit their loyalty and to wreak vengeance upon the leader of the race with whom they had a feud. Other Rajput clans too had assembled to justify the Emperor's confidence in them. The Saiyids of Barha wished to show that their monopoly of the Mughal vanguard was not without good reason. The Shaikhzadas of Sikri were poor soldiers, but to them and to Qazi Khan Badakhshi, a religious dignitary, it was a *jihad*. Some nobles such as Naqib Khan were keen to earn the merit of fighting a religious war, but not under a Hindu commander.[4]

Mulla 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni, a Rajasthani Shaikhzada in whom the urge to fight a religious war was stirring considered he religion of the Commander a trifling matter. He argued that one of His Majesty's servants was the commander; purity of intention alone mattered not personalities.[5]

When the battle was raging fiercely, Badauni asked his senior colleague, Asaf Khan how a friendly Rajput could be distinguished from a hostile one. The answer was typically cynical:

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[1] I. A. Khan, The Nobility under Akbar and the Development of His Religious Policy, *JRAS*, 1968, pp. 35-36. [2] See *Infra*.

[3] *MT*, II, pp. 231, 234; Lowe, p. 236, 239.

[4] *MT*, II, pp. 228-29; Lowe, pp. 233-34.

"Go on shooting arrows, don't bother. On whichever side they are killed it is a gain to Islam."[1]

Badauni, who was never able to comply with the obligations of even a petty *mansabdar* of twenty, acted upon this advice. The Saiyids of Barha put up a heroic fight. The Shaikhzadas of Sikri fled; their leader, Shaikh Mansur, son-in-law of Shaikh Ibrahim, was struck with an arrow through his buttocks. Qazi Khan Badakhshi stood firm for some time, but then was wounded and retreated. It was then that the steadfastness of the Saiyids counteracted the confusion caused by the flight of the *mujahids* (Muslim heroes). The Rajput under Man Singh proved true Mulla Sheri's verse:

"A Hindu wields the sword of Islam."

The son of Jaimal of Chitor, Ram Sah, and the Raja of Gwaliar and his son Salbahan lost their lives. Badauni regarded them all as having gone to hell, a thought which gave him satisfaction, for in his opinion:

"To reduce the quantity of rubbish makes the world pure."

The attitude of Muslim racial groups towards the Rajputs was not reasonable, but the Rajputs were not troubled. They were themselves orthodox Hindus, and so long as their freedom to worship in their own way and obtain an honourable place in the Mughal service was not affected, they cared nothing for the workings of Muslim ideological tension. Rajput loyalty to the Mughals was motivated by the political and economic advantages to be gained. Man Singh used to make special arrangement for Muslim prayers in his campaigns.[3] After the flight of Maharana Pratap, when Badauni wished to go back to the Court, Man Singh urged:

> "There is a great deal of work still left undone, you should act as an *imam* of the ranks everywhere in the battle-field."[4]

On the authority of a *hadis* of Prophet Muhammad, Muslims found no objection in flight in the face of heavy odds;[5] to Rajputs it was a disgrace in any situation. They did not waver even in the war against Maharana Pratap, when the fighters of

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 231; Lowe, p. 237; See *Infra*.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 233; *Ibid*, p. 239.

[3] *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin*, p. 107.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 235; *Ibid*, p. 241.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 232; *Ibid*, p. 238.

jihad took to their heels. In reposing his confidence in different groups, Akbar had to take account of such realities as these.

Protection of his military interests did not stimulate Akbar to search for a new ideological basis for the relationship between different elite groups; the old political and economic basis served the purpose without much difficulty. From the beginning of his reign, Akbar's efforts to develop a sound system for revenue assessment and the stabilization of state demands met with resistance, and both the policy and the policy-makers were bitterly attacked by disgruntled elements. Not even the highest Muslim officials were spared; and the confidence reposed by the Emperor in Raja Todar Mal was deeply resented by Muslim nobles. In 1563-64 they urged the Emperor to remove him but Akbar silenced them with the reply:

> "Every one of you has employed a Hindu to manage your establishment. We too have a Hindu; why do you complain against him?"[1]

The logic of the Emperor was simple but from the point of view of the Muslim grandees, the matter was not to be dismissed so lightly. Even the elevation of Khwaja Muzaffar 'Ali Khan Turbati, a distinguished Irani, to the post of *diwan* was commemorated by the chronogram *zalim* (cruel). The disagreements between the Khwaja and Raja Todar Mal were the talk of the town, and the following epigram was widely recited:

> The Raja's dog is better than Muzaffar Khan, Although any dog is a hundred times better than the Raja.[2]

The antagonistic attitude of the Muslim elite towards the Hindus did not discourage Akbar, who was determined to tether different political elements to the central authority. The strict enforcement of the *dagh* regulations and crystallisation about 1575 of the graded bureaucratic establishment known as the *mansabdari* system offered a solution, by increasing the interdependence of the military and civil officers. As pointed out by Professor Percival Spear, "The whole system *(mansabdari)* was ingeniously designed to cloak differences of obligation, and the realities of service beneath dignified titles. It was a way of reconciling family and tribal aritsocratic pride with the discipline of a bureaucratic system."[1] The Emperor issued orders, and was responsible for promotions and demotions, but the *diwans*[2] calculated the revenue of *jagirs*[3] given instead of salary. The system of payment for services through transferable *jagirs* heightened tensions between different racial groups as well as between the *mansabdars* and the *diwans*, but everyone could not pull in different directions for long; each had finally to collaborate with the other.

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 66; Lowe, II, p. 65.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 65-66; *Ibid*, p. 64.

Equally complex was the nature of the dependence of the *mansabdars* on the *zamindars* of different categories, particularly on those whom Professor Nuru'l Hasan calls the intermediary *zamindars*.[4] They were the backbone of land-revenue administration, collecting the dues from the holders of proprietory rights and paying them into the imperial treasury, or to the *jagirdars*, or to the chieftains. Although they constantly struggled to extend their power and authority, their administrative responsibilities contributed to the development of an atmosphere of understanding between them and the *mansabdars*. The *zamindars* of the *mawas* or inaccessible regions were always troublesome, but in the firmly-controlled plains, the *zamindars* co-operated with the government. Through them some elements of Mughal culture penetrated into the villages of the Gangetic doab.

The adoption of the office routine of the Courts of Iran in the revenue department and the increasing use of Persian in revenue administration, made khattaris, kayasthas and brahmans who learnt Persian and obtained training under the Iranis, indispensable to the Mughal government. Not only the imperial government but also the nobles employed Hindu *diwans*; this contributed to the absorption into the local or imperial service of the Hindu elite with a knowledge of Persian. A good knowledge of *siyaq*[1] (accountancy) qualified candidates for the post of a *nawisinda* (accountant) or a *munshi* (scribe or secretary), the first rung on the ladder leading to the much-coveted post of *diwan*.[2] Gradually a curriculum emerged which Hindus as well as Muslims studied. A letter from Chandrabhan Brahman (*c.* 1600-60) to his son gives a fair idea of the educational requirements for the posts of *nawisindas* and *munshis*. He admits that a command over Persian was difficult, but advises that after completing an elementary education, Sa'di's[3] *Gulist'an* and *Bustan* the *Ruq'at* of Mulla Jami[4] should be mastered. Later on *Akhlaq i-Nasiri*,[5] *Akhlaq i-Jalali*,[6] *Habibu's Siyar*,[7] *Rauzatu's Safa*,[8] *Tarikh i-Guzida*,[9] *Tarikh i-Tabari*,,[10] *Zafar Nama*[11] and *Akbar Nama* should be studied. The study of historical works was

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[1] Percival Spear, The Mughal Mansabdari System, in Edmund Leach and S. N. Mukherjee, *Elites in South Asia* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 6.

[2] Under the Sultans, the officer dealing with revenue and finance was known as *wazir*, but under the Mughals, the head of the revenue and finance department came to be known as *diwan*.

[3] The areas whose revenue the Emperors assigned to their mansabdars were called *jagir*. *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, pp. 257-70; see also chapter IV, *Supra*.

[4] S. Nurul Hasan, Zamindars under the Mughals in R.E. Frykenberg, *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History* (Wisconsin, 1969), pp. 25-27.

The manuals of *siyaq* were generally written by Hindus. Some important examples are:
Jagat Rai Shuja'i Kayath Saksena, *Farhang i-Kardani* written in 1679. Munshi Nand Rama Kayasth, Srivastava, *Siyaq Nama*, written in 1694-96, Udai Chand, *Farhang i-Kardani*. Jawahar Nath Bekas Sahaswani, *Dasturu'l 'Amal*. Braj Rai, *Dasturu'l 'Amal*. *Khulasatu's Siyaq*, ascribed to several scholars.

[2] *Khulasatu's Siyaq* (Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, Suppl', Pers. 303) ff. 2b-3a.

[3] Born between 610-151 1213-19, achieved fame in Shiraz in 1256-57 and died on 9 December 1292. He is well known for his inimitable facility and profound ethical and mystic works.

[4] Nuru'd Din 'Abdu'r Rahman Jami (1414-92), the famous sufi and poet.

[5] Nasiru' d-Din Tusi (1201-74) the famous astronomer, philosopher, religious thinker, and the author of *Akhlaq i-Nasiri*.

[6] For its author, Jalalu'd Din Dauwani see *Supra*.

[7] Written by Ghiyasu'd Din bin Humamu'd Din, surnamed Khwand-Amir, and completed in 1499-1500; a well known general history in Persian, Storey, pp. 101-06.

[8] Muhammad bin Khawand-Shah (d. 1498) was the grandfather of Khwandamir; Storey, pp. 92-96.

[9] Hamdu'llah bin Abi Bakr wrote *Tarikh i-Guzida*, a general history to 1329-30.

[10] Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari (838-923) entitled his famous Arabic history *Tarikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*. Its abridged Persian translation, entitled *Tarjumah i-Tarikh i-Tabari* by Abu 'Ali Muhammad al-Bala'mi (died 940) was widely read in the Mughal India. Storey, pp. 61-63.

[11] Sharafu'd Din 'Ali Yazdi completed *Zafar Nama* in 1424-25. It is a florid history of Timur and Khalil Sultan.

intended to train scholars in the course of Islamic history, particularly the history of the Mongols and the Timurids in Iran. The study of Persian ethico-political works was to make them acquainted with the philosophy of Avicenna and the theosophy of Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi Maqtul. The study of Persian poetry was thought essential for polishing one's language. Abu'l Fazl, too, advises the Muslim nobles to study these same historical and ethico-political works. He adds the *Kimiya i-Sa'adat* and *Ihya al-'Ulum* of Ghazali, but thinks that nobles, worldly people as they are, might prefer the study of historical to ethico-political works and the writings of *sufis*.[1] By the end of Akbar's reign Persian translations of Sanskrit works became popular amongst both the Hindu and Muslim elite. The belief in the Emperor as a source of stability and solidarity was supported by the entire Mughal elite, "the *mulhids*[2] of the age," the orthodox Muslims of Badauni's school, and the Rajputs.

The aura around the Mughal throne aroused a sense of loyalty to it but did not prevent occasional acts of disobedience and rebellion, which were invariably justified as attempts to destroy evil influences which undermined the authority of the emperor.[3] Generally rival nobles and parties which influenced imperial policy were the subject of attack.

Akbar's foster-brother Mirza 'Aziz Koka, for example, strongly opposed the Imperial rules for branding horses and many other regulations, but after a time he was reconciled with the Emperor and performed distinguished services in Bengal. In 1589 he was appointed governor of Gujarat, but refused to go, saying he preferred Malwa. After a year's delay he took up his assignment of Gujarat, which he claimed to be equivalent to exile. However, keeping up his tradition of conquest, he captured Junagarh and sixteen seaports.[4] Imperial policy required nobles on frontier stations to attend at Court periodically; but when after some years Mirza 'Aziz was recalled there from Gujarat, he refused to obey. Eventually, in 1593, he left for Mecca, writing to Akbar to complain that his enemies had poisoned the Emperor's mind and sought his ruin. He added that he had gone to Mecca because he did not want his body, which had been reared by Imperial favour, to be contaminated by association well such as Shaikh Abu'l Fazl. He claimed that the Sultan of Turkey, who controlled the holy places, would give him the title of A'zam Khan if he asked for it; but that he had decided to stay in Mecca and start a school there in the name of Akbar. The Emperor might award that title to anyone who wanted it; and he added as a parting shot that those who had alienated Akbar from Islam were not his friends but were only flatterers and time-servers.[1]

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[1] *MA*, II, p. 129.

[2] A heretic; one who turns away from the faith. Badauni used the word for the supporters of the new intellectual movements of Akbar's reign.

[3] *Najatu'r Rashid*, f. 12a.

[4] S.A.A. Rizvi, The Mughal Elite in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, *Abr Nahrain* (Leiden, 1971), pp. 92-93.

[5] *AN*, III, pp. 628-29; Bev, III, pp. 962-64.

However, before long the Mirza grew tired of Mecca; it seems that the Sherifs, who received regular pensions from Akbar were instigated to make Mirza 'Aziz's life difficult there. After an absence of eighteen months, he returned to India in 1594, accepted the four degrees of devotion[2] and was made the *wakil*.[3]

Later Mirza 'Aziz's unceasing efforts to ensure the succession of his son-in-law Khusrau in place of Jahangir estranged him from the Emperor, nevertheless from time to time he received important assignments. In 1912 Jahangir sent the Mirza, at his own request, against Rana Amar Singh of Udaipur. The resulting campaign languished.[4] Jahangir complained, and the annoyed Mirza wrote a strong letter of protest accusing the Emperor himself of spreading sedition and discord among his nobles, adding that those who posed as his well-wishers had sworn to tell nothing but lies and were concerned with nothing but hypocrisy. He further wrote:

> "His Majesty Akbar during the fifty years of his rule increased the number of Chaghta'is and Rajputs (in the rank of the nobles), for they are not seditious. They know nothing but loyalty. Since your accession Your Majesty has destroyed both groups and has entrusted your entire administration to Khurasanis and Shaikhzadas who know nothing but hypocrisy and sedition."[5]

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[1] Mirza 'Aziz's title was A'zam Khan, Mirza 'Aziz's letter to Akbar (John Ryland Library, Manchester Pers. Ms. No. 425).

[2] See *Infra*. [3] *AN*, III, p. 669; Bev, III, p. 1026.

[4] *Tuzuk*, pp. 123-26.

[5] Jalal Hisari and Balkrishna Brahman: Untitled collection of letters

The rise or fall of the prominent leaders of a group, tribe or clan was regarded as an index of the fortunes of the entire group. Many of them were conscious of their importance as a racial group. Moves to counteract the influence of rising stars were started immediately their possible ascendancy became apparent, and constantly shifting party alignments depended upon personal ambitions, individual convenience and political circumstances.

The increasing dependance of all grades of *mansabdars* and *zamindars* on the Emperor for promotions and favours contributed to the crystallisation of common value judgments and ethical behaviour amongst the Mughal elite, They urged that only people with noble blood in their veins were dependable and capable of performing loyal and meritorious services. The Muslim elite groups and Rajputs as well as other high-caste Hindus, were regarded as noble. It was believed that learning and science benefited only men of noble blood, and that the lower classes should not be allowed to acquire higher learning,[1] lest they rebel. This way of thinking was intended to reduce competition, for Akbar's policy had attracted an ever-increasing number of leaders of different tribes and races to the Mughal service.

The new intellectual movements, together with Akbar's religious policy, sharpened ideological tensions. Although the spectrum of views and ideologies was quite wide, in general three different attitudes crystallised, and divided the elite into three different sections: that of the innovators supporting the new intellectual movements; that of their opponents; and that of those who preferred to remain neutral. Each category had its Hindu and Muslim votaries. The innovators advocated the need of an open mind in trying to understand the ideologies of different religions. They sought out points of similarity, and represented these as the essence of these systems, relegating the differences to the background. They argued that a sympathetic attitude towards the religions of others did not undermine one's own religious beliefs and convictions. Their approach, not necessarily scientific in all cases, was designed to reduce religious tensions. Broadly, the

(British Museum Ms. Add 16, 859). f. 19a. The sheets of Jahangir's letter in reply to Mirza 'Aziz's have been misplaced in binding, and this letter seems to have escaped the attention of scholars who have read this collection. Jahangir's reply may be found on ff. 38b, 36a, 36b and 40a.)

[1] *MT*, II, p. 356.

Hindu and Muslim elite influenced by Akbar's policy of "peace with all" belonged to this category. Among them were the Shaikhzadas of Sikri and Awadh, Abu'l Fazl and his supporters, and a large proportion of the Irani immigrants.

On the other side were the rigid Sunnis, and some Hindus too, who were alarmed by the new liberal currents. Badauni and Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi were the leaders of the narrow-minded elite.

The third and perhaps the largest group among the Mughal elite followed a middle-of-the road policy. Their intellectual interests were in harmony with those of the first group but they felt that they should be circumspect in their behaviour and avoid provoking the orthodox Hindus and Muslims. Shaikh Farid Bukhari among the Muslims and Raja Man Singh among the Hindus, represented their way of thinking.

Where dress, domestic architecture and style of living were concerned, Hindus and Muslims came to have much in common. In matters relating to food and drink, however, they adhered to their own social taboos, although Akbar himself tried to set a good example by giving up the eating of beef and becoming a vegetarian. The Rajputs, who were not vegetarians, had no difficulty in popularising the Mughal cuisine, which came to be known as Mughla'i. High-caste Hindus ate their food apart in their traditional manner, and these and others of their social customs were respected by Muslims. Such questions as inter-dining, which developed into a major issue of Hindu-Muslim conflict in the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, did not in those days disturb the Hindu and Muslim elite or, for that matter, the common people. Some orthodox Sunnis would not eat in Hindu houses; and the Shi'is, although they were very friendly with Hindus, would not eat food cooked by them because of their too-rigid interpretation of orthodox rules relating to *najs*[1] (unclean). An interesting glimpse of Afghan nobles of the time of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi having meals in the house of Rana Sanga, while he humbly stood to entertain the guests without joining them in eating, is preserved in the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi*.[2]

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[1] "O you who believe, the idolaters (*mushrikun*) are surely unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year. (9H/630-31). And if you fear poverty, then Allah will enrich you out of His grace; if He please. Surely Allah is Knowing, Wise". (IX, 28). [2] *WM*, ff. 73a-b.

Rajputs married their daughters to the Mughals, but there is no known case of a Mughal marrying his daughter to a Rajput. Akbar's reactions to this question is not known, but Jahangir was definitely hostile to the idea.[1] However, Akbar would not have hesitated to give his daughters in marriage to the Rajputs, had the social system of the Rajputs allowed them to be accepted on the same terms of equality as Akbar granted the Rajput princesses. He probably saw that the time was still not ripe for interfering with the Rajput social customs. Rajputs did nevertheless have Muslim concubines[2] even before Akbar's reign; such instances being too common to mention.

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[1] *Tarikh i-Sher Shahi*, p. 190.

CHAPTER 6

TRANSLATION BUREAU OF AKBAR

(*The Maktab Khana*)

The early history of the scientific and intellectual activities of the Muslims is characterised by three marked phases of development. In the first they translated Sanskrit and Greek works, in the second they syncretized various Indian and Greek systems and in the third they made some original contributions of their own. Of the Sanskrit works, what appealed to them most were astronomy, mathematics and "wisdom literature." The *Siddhanta* (Arabic *Sindhind*), a treatise on astronomy, and *Kalilah wa Dimnah* were translated and retranslated. The intellectual legacy of Greece was so compatible with the early rationalistic movements of Islam that they largely ignored the Sanskrit religio-philosophical works. Interesting glimpses of Hinduism and its manners and customs have been preserved in Abu Sa'id 'Abdu'l Hay Gardezi's *Zainu'l Akhbar* (written *c.* 1041), which was mainly based upon the lost portion of *Kitab al-Masalik wa'l Mamalik* (The book of itineraries and kingdoms) by Ibn Khurradazbih (825-911). Al-Biruni (362/973-442/1050) translated several Sanskrit works into Arabic and made further researches in his monumental *Tarikh al-Hind. Shahrastani* (469/1076-548/1153) gave an analytical summary of Hinduism in his celebrated *Kitab al-Milal wa'l Nihal*, a treatise on religions and sects, but these works had no noticeable impact upon the Indian Muslims of succeeding generations. The travellers and geographers who visited India from the eleventh to the thirteenth century and wrote their accounts in Arabic did not examine their sources critically. Their works are based mainly on oral information. The account of Hinduism in the works of Banakiti[1]

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[1] *Rauzat uli'l-albab fi tawarikh al-akabir wa'l ansab*, more compendiously and popularly known as *Tarikh i-Banakati*, is a general history from Adam to Sultan Abu Sa'id's accession in 1317. The seventh *qism* (chapter) comprises an account of the Hindus to Sultan 'Ala'u'd Din Khalji (Ethe, ff. 182a-193a).

(d. 730/1329-307) and Hafiz Abru[1] (d. 1430), studied by the Muslim elite of Iran and India between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, is generally confused and inaccurate.

Some sufis, as we have already discussed,[2] studied Hindu devotional thoughts with sympathy and interest. Saiyid Muhammad bin Saiyid Yusuf Husaini Gisudaraz claims to have studied the religious works of the Hindus with the avowed purpose of carrying on polemical discussions with the brahman.[3] Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq, after his conquest of Nagarkot in 763/1362, acquired about 1300 volumes of Sanskrit manuscripts from the Jwalamukhi temple there. He had some of them translated and seems to have become enamoured of Sanskrit works on astronomy and mathematics. A Sanskrit work on physics and astronomy was translated into Persian at the Sultan's insistence by 'izzu'd Din Khalid Khani and was entitled *Dala'il i-Firuz Shahi*. The work is not now extant; but it was in Akbar's reign, and was examined by Nizamu'd Din Ahmad Bakhshi.[4] One of the Surviving Persian translations of Sanskrit works ordered during sultan Firuz Shah's reign is the translation of the *Brihatsamhita*, written by the celebrated Indian astronomer Varahamihira, son of Adityadasa. It was translated by 'Abdu'l 'Aziz Shams Baha i-Nuri.[5] The original was earlier translated by al-Biruni[6], but 'Abdu'l 'Aziz does not seem to have utilized that version. Sultan Zainu'l 'Abidin of Kashmir (826/1420-877/1470), Sultan Sikandar Lodi, and several other Muslim rulers took an interest in Sanskrit works and had them translated, but Akbar gave a new impetus to the translation of works of outstanding merit from different languages into Persian. He had two reasons: to gratify his own intellectual curiosity, and to promote mutual understanding among members of the new elite. Whether Muslim or Hindu, the language of their daily intercourse was Persian.

As a child, Akbar had not been interested in reading and writing but had listened attentively to the verses of Rumi and Hafiz. When he came to the throne, books were regularly read to him. History and legends were his favourite themes. Among the best loved was the *Hamza Nama*, a collection of legendary heroic tales based on a conflation of two historical personages: the Prophet's uncle Amir Hamza b. 'Abdu'l Muttalib (killed in the battle of Badr 2/624) and a Persian adventurer Amir Hamza (d. 825-26 or 828-29) who headed popular movements against the 'Abbasid Caliphate and was believed to have led expeditions against "Sind and Hind" and even Ceylon.

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[1] *Majmu'ahi-Hafiz i-Abru* by Shihabu'd Din 'Abdu'llah, known as *Hafiz Abru*, is a conflation of Bal'ami's translation of Tabari, Rashidu'd Din's *Jami'u't Tawarikh* and Nizami Shami's *Zafar Nama*.

[2] See *Supra*.

[3] *Jawami'u'l Kilam* (Br. Mues. or 252) ff. 87a-90a; *MRM*, p. 55.

[4] *Tabaqat*, I, pp. 233-34.

[5] I.O. London Ms. 1262.

[6] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, preface, p. 20.

[7] *A'in*, I, p. 76.

In about 1568 Akbar ordered a number of his court painters to illustrate the legends of Amir Hamza on a vast scale. A team of about 100 artists was employed to complete the work, at first under the direction of Mir Saiyid 'Ali Juda'i, the son of the famous Persian painter Mir Musawwir,[1] and subsequently under Khwaja 'Abdu's Samad Shirazi.[2] The work was planned in twelve big volumes; each volume comprising 100 leaves one cubit square. The prose rendered into verse by Khwaja 'Atau'llah Munshi Qazwini provided a running commentary to the illustrations.[3] Similarly the legendary tales of Abu Muslim Khurasani, (killed January-February 755) the celebrated adventurer of Iranian origin, who had led the movement to supplant the Umaiyads by the 'Abbasids, aroused Akbar's interest. He also admired the *Shah Nama* of Firdausi and the *Jami'u'l Hikayat.*[4]

By 1574-75 Akbar's religious and intellectual yearnings had broadened his interests. In Jumada 11, 982/September-October 1574 at Qanauj, when he was returning from his eastern campaigns, he ordered Mulla 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni to translate the *Singhasan Battisi (Simhasandvatrimsatika* or *Vikramacaritram)*, embodying the stories of Bikarmajit (Raja Vikramaditya) and the thirty-two statues *(puttali)*, from Sanskrit into Persian. A learned brahman was appointed as Badauni's collaborator to interpret the Sanskrit text for him. In obedience to the Emperor's order, he translated two pages and submitted them on the very day he was commissioned to undertake the work. Akbar found them satisfactory and the work, which was entitled *Nama i-Khirad Afza* (The Wisdom Augmenting Book) was completed within about a year.[1]

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[1] The celebrated painter at the court of Shah Tahmasp Safavi of Iran (930/1524-984/1576). During his exile in Iran, Humayun tried in vain to attract him to his service, but he seems to have joined Humayun at last in Kabul before 1555. His son Saiyid 'Ali was the leading painter in Akbar's court. Mir Saiyid 'Ali the son of Mir Mansur distinguished himself as a great painter under Akbar. Humayun invited him to join his court after his conquest of Kabul in November 1545.

[2] Abdu's Samad was also invited by Humayun to join his court at Kabul. Bayazid, *Tazkira i-Humayun wa Akbar* (Calcutta, 1941), p. 65. He was appointed by Humayun to teach the art of painting to Akbar. A miniature signed by 'Abdu's Samad, and preserved in the Gulistan Palace library in Tehran, depicts the young Akbar presenting a painting to his father Humayun, probably shortly before his death in 1556. Barret, Douglas and Basil Gray, *Indian, Painting* p. 78.

[3] 'Arif, pp. 45-46. [4] *MT*, II, p. 320.

Next year Akbar ordered Abu'l Fazl to translate *Hayatu'l Haiwan*, the celebrated zoological dictionary, and compendium of folk-lore, and popular medicine by Kamalu'd Din Muhammad bin Musa Damiri (d. 808/1405-6) from Arabic into Persian. According to Badauni, the actual translation was made by a Shaikh Mubarak, the father of Abu'l Fazl.[2]

About the same time Badauni was ordered to translate the *Atharva Veda* on the basis of Shaikh Bhawan's interpretations, but the interpreter failed to explain several complicated passages adequately. Badauni reported his difficulties to Akbar. The Emperor ordered first Faizi and later Hajji Ibrahim Sihrindi to translate the work, but not much progress was made.[3]

When the scope of the activities of the *'Ibadat Khana* was widened and adherents of other religions were admitted to the discussions, the need for authentic Persian translations of different religious works became imperative. In 986/1578, Abu'l Fazl was ordered to translate the *Injil* (The Gospel) into Persian. Maclagan says "But whether this related to the Four Gospels of the Scriptures generally, and whether order was carried out either directly or through the Fathers we do not know."[4] It seems that by Rabi' I 990/March-April 1552, when Akbar wrote a letter to the king of Portugal, authentic Persian or Arabic translations for *Taurit* (The books of Moses), *Injil* (The Gospels) and *Zubur* (The Psalms of David) were not available at his court; and he had to ask him for these works together with other Persian and Arabic works on Christianity, obtainable in Portugal.[5] No copy of Abu'l Fazl's translation of the *Gospels* is extant, but it seems that he made a translation with the help of the Fathers. In place of the *Bismi'llah* (In the name of God) with which the Muslim scholars commenced their works, Abu'l Fazl introduced the formula, *Ai nam i-wai Zhizh wa Kristo* (O He, whose name is Jesus and Christ). Shaikh Faizi added to it the line: *Subhanaka la Siwaka ya hu* (Praise be to Thee, there is none like Thee, O He!).[1]

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 257. [2] *Ibid*, p. 204. [3] *Ibid*, p. 212.

[4] *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p. 213.

[5] *Mukatabat*, I, pp. 37-38.

These translations seem to have stimulated Akbar's interest in the translation of Sanskrit religious work on an ambitious scale. A regular translation bureau called *Maktab Khana* (writing house) was established in the *Diwan Khana I-Khass* of Fathpur-Sikri.[2] Badauni says that after getting *Shah Nama* and the story of *Amir Hamza* transcribed and illustrated and after having repeatedly heard the stories of Abu Muslim and the *Jamu'l Hikayat*, he decided to get the works of the ancient Indian sages translated into Persian. The Emperor, according to Badauni, thought to himself:

> "Most of these books are nothing but poetry and fiction; but since they were first related in a lucky hour, and at a time when their stars were in ascendancy, they obtained great fame. Now why should I not have the Sanskrit works translated in my name; for they were written by the ascetics and sages of the past and all of them embody correct and convincing proofs (about Hinduism) and are the very pivot on which their religion, beliefs and forms of worship turns. They are by no means trite but quite original; and they will produce all kinds of fruits of felicity both temporal and spiritual, and will be the cause of affluence and power, and will ensure an abundance of children and wealth, as is written in the prefaces of these book."[3]

Abu'l Fazl in his preface to the Persian translation of the *Mahabharata* gives a detailed account of the motives which prompted Akbar to see that Persian translations of Sanskrit works were made under his auspices. This tends to show that this comprehensive scheme was designed to promote the understanding of different religions among his subjects. Before discussing Akbar's motives, Abu'l Fazl laments that the rulers of the past neglected the vital duty of looking after the religious needs of the common people. Even when the religious problems of their subjects reached their ears, they did not pay attention to them. Fear of the slanderous campaigns of "babblers" prevented them from taking up religious questions personally; they entrusted these problems to people who knew about nothing except issuing *fatwas* (judicial or religious decrees), and to theologians who did not understand the real spirit of their religion.

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 260.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 344. The term Maktab-Khana has not attracted the notice of modern scholars.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 320.

But, says Abu'l Fazl, Akbar initiated a bold policy so that in his age "the pillars of blind following" were demolished and a new era of research and enquiry in religious matters commenced.[1] Referring to the new regulations issued by Akbar, he says that it was only after they were promulgated that the consciousness grew that kings were not well advised to rule without them.[2]

Turning to Akbar's motives in getting the *Mahabharata* translated into Persian, Abu'l Fazl says that Akbar was anxious to introduce reforms among all sections of his subjects and did not discriminate between friend and foe. As he found that there were exceedingly great differences amongst Hindus and Muslims, and there was no end to the polemics involved, he decided to get the reliable texts of both religions translated, so that shaking off their enmity, they, should try to search for truth. Thus having obtained a knowledge of their respective shortcomings they should set themselves to reform. Moreover Akbar found that there was no dearth of people in every religion who thought of themselves as perfect, who misinterpreted their religious beliefs and did not bring the standard works of their religion to the knowledge of the common people. Thus the spirit of the faith remained concealed. Akbar found it essential to prevent the people from falling victims to the nefarious designs of such custodians of faith, and decided that if the standard works of different religions were translated into a simple language, they would be able to know the truth for themselves. This would put an end to the monopoly of those who did not state the real spirit of their religion to their respective followers.[3]

Time and time again Abu'l Fazl turns to criticize the ignorance and short-sightedness of his contemporaries. He was convinced that Hindu scholars held fantastic views about their faith; that, because of their ignorance and want of discrimination, they considered even the silliest objects of their belief above reproach and followed their faith blindly.[1] They had filled the minds of the simple people with superficial things and held them back from the path of religious enquiry. The followers of the Ahmadi faith (the Muslims) who were ignorant of the realities of Hinduism based their views on such misrepresentations and denounced the religion. They did not have any first hand information of the standard works of different religions such as those of the Indians and the Chinese, nor had they studied the works of great men of their own religion such as those of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq[2] (80/699-148/765) and Ibn 'Arabi.[3] They thus believed that the human race had been in existence for seven thousand odd years and all of its intellectual heritage was confined to that period.[4]

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[1] *Mahabharata*, Persian translation (Lucknow n. d.) Abu'l Fazl's preface, p. 4. [2] *Ibid*, p. 6. [3] *Ibid*, p. 15.

The translation of the *Mahabharata* was given priority for several reasons. It was the standard text of Hinduism and "a compendium of the basic and minor beliefs of the brahmans." It described the great antiquity of the world and its inhabitants. Lastly, the study of history enabled the people "to take lessons from the past and to devote their present to compliance with the commandments of God Most High in the right spirit. Thus kings, more than anyone else, are in need of obtaining knowledge of the past."[5] Abu'l Fazl adds:

> "A group of wise linguists, who by virtue of their abundance of wisdom and uprightness were free from bigotry and fanaticism and were endowed with equity and justice in their outlook, were collected in order that they should translate the work into a lucid and intelligible language with penetrating insight. After the work was compiled a large number of people obtained copies, and took them as gifts to different parts of the world."[6]

According to the colophon of the manuscripts of the *Mahabharata* in several collections Debi Misra, Satuwani, Madhusudhan

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[1] According to Badauni, the Hindus did not disclose the contents of their religious works to Muslims, (*MT*, II, p. 320.)

[2] Ja'far bin Muhammad, called Sadiq ('The Trustworthy'), (80 or 83/69, or 702—148/765) is recognised by the Shi'as as their sixth Imam. Shi'is trace traditions about Muhammad through him.

[3] For the cosmological doctrines in the *Rasa'il* of the *Ikhwan al-safa*, the works of al-Biruni, Ibn Sina and Ibn 'Arabi, *see* Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines.*

[4] *Mahabharata*, p. 24. [5] *Ibid*, pp. 15-16. [6] *Ibid*, p. 17.

Misra, Chaturbhuj Misra and Sahikh Bhawan collaborated with Muslim scholars in preparing its translation. The work was commenced at the end of 990/1583, by Naqib Khan. For several nights the Emperor himself presided. On the third night Mulla 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni was ordered to collaborate with Naqib Khan. Badauni says:

> The consequence was that in three "or four months I translated two out of eighteen sections, at the puerile absurdities of which the eighteen thousand creations may well be amazed."

Afterwards Mulla Sheri and Naqib Khan completed a part of the work and another was compiled by Sultan Hajji Thaneswari. Shaikh Faizi was then ordered to rewrite the translation in elegant prose and verse, but he did not complete more than two sections. Sultan Hajji wrote two sections and amended the mistakes which had occurred in his earlier renderings. One hundred closely written *juz* (a *juz* comprises about a quire of paper) were written. According to Badauni, not a flymark of the original was omitted.[1]

It seems certain enough that the first two *parvans* were re-written in an ornate prose by Faizi in 997/1587.[2] The rest of the translation was made by Naqib Khan, Badauni, Mulla Sheri, and Hajji Sultan Thaneswari. The conflicting notes in the colophons of the available manuscripts and Badauni's self-contradictory remarks have made it exceedingly difficult to exactly determine the share of each contributor. On the whole, the work is not disjointed. It seems that Naqib Khan finally rewrote it to make it a unified whole.

> The translation was named *Razm Nama*. Badauni says: "Shaikh Abu'l Fazl in contrast to the commentary on the *Ayah al Kursi*,[3] which he had formerly composed, now wrote for it a preface extending to two *juz*."[4]

Abu'l Fazl's preface is found in many manuscripts of the *Mahabharata* and was also published by the Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow. It runs into thirty six pages of the Nawal Kishore edition and consists of two parts:

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 320-21.

[2] India Office Ms. 761.

[3] *Qur'an*, Chapter II, verse 256.

[4] *MT*, II, p. 321.

(a) an account of Akbar's motives in getting the work translated, and
(b) an analysis of the contents of the work.

Nowhere does Abu'l Fazl mention his commentary on the *Ayah al Kursi*, let alone contradict it. This shows how Badauni sought to distort history without any fear of being exposed.

Akbar carefully supervised the translation in order to guard against the possibilities of interpolation and misinterpretation. He often wrongly suspected that Badauni was trying to make interpolations; occasionally he lost his temper and abused him, calling him ***haram khor*** (venal) or ***shalgham khor*** (a turnip-eater). Badauni gives the following detailed account of a criticism Akbar made in Rajab 1003/ March-April 1595.

> "We (Akbar) had thought that so and so (Badauni) was an unworldly being of sufi tendencies, but he appears to be such a bigoted *faqih* (jurist) that no sword can sever the jugular vein of his bigotry."

Abu'l Fazl enquired in what book Badauni had written something to make His Majesty speak of him thus. He replied; "Why in the *Razm Nama* (the *Mahabharata*) and last night I called Naqib Khan in witness of this matter." Shaikh Abu'l Fazl said, "He committed a mistake." Badauni in his own defence submitted, "I was a translator, nothing more, and whatever the sages of India have represented therein, I translated without alteration, but if I had written it myself, I should have been to blame, and should have acted accordingly." Shaikh Abu'l Fazl supported Badauni, and the Emperor was silenced. In fact, Badauni had formerly, in the *Razm Nama*, translated a story that one of the Indian sages said by way of advice to those present:

> "It is right that a man should step out of the limits of ignorance and negligence, should first of all become acquainted with the Peerless Creator, and should pursue the path of knowledge, and not be satisfied with mere knowledge without practice, for that yields no fruit. He should choose the path of virtue, and as far as in him lies, withdraw his hand from evil actions, and should know for certain that every action will be enquired into."

Badauni concluded the passage with this hemstitch:

Every action hath its reward,
And every deed its recompense.

Akbar deemed it as an interpolation designed to bring in the beliefs in Munkar and Nakir,[1] the Resurrection and the Day of Judgement etc., which according to Badauni were incompatible with the beliefs of the Emperor who never talked of anything but metapsychosis. Badauni subsequently impressed upon all the courtiers that the Indian sages believed in the truth of "Reward and punishment" of "Good and bad actions." Thus "When a person dies, the scribe who writes the chronicle of the deeds of mankind throughout their lives, takes it before the angel, who is the Seizer of souls, and is called the King of Justice. After he has examined his good and bad deeds, and has found out which one predominates, he says, 'This person has his choice'. Then he asks him, 'Shall I first for thy good actions take thee to paradise, that thou mayest there enjoy to the full delights in proportion to thy good actions, and after that send thee to hell to expiate thy sins or vice versa?" When that period comes to an end, he gives orders that the person should return to the earth, and, assuming a form suitable to his past actions, should pass a certain period; and so on, *ad infinitum* until the time when he attains absolute release; and is freed from coming into and leaving the world.[2]

Abu'l Fazl's Preface

Abu'l Fazl's preface to the *Razm Nama* which he wrote in 995/1587 is valuable in its own right. It begins with the formula *Sri Ganesaya namah* (Reverence to Lord Ganesha) and praise of God, omitting the praise of Muhammad altogether, but without forgetting Akbar. It introduces the translation to the readers, mainly Muslims, in a very scholarly manner. He classifies the Indian sages into three categories: metaphysicians, ascetics and law-makers.[3] Of Hindu theories of cosmogony, he found thirteen propounded in the work, none of which fully convinced him. Some of them according to him, could not be contradicted by reason; others after a little thought could be rejected; while the rest deserved thoughtful consideration. Up to the time of the writing of the preface a large number of Brahmas[1] had come into existence and vanished.[2] He found this theory compatible with the view of Imam J'afar al-Sadiq who is said to have observed that before the birth of Adam thousands of other Adams had been born. Similarly, Ibn 'Arabi held that before the race of one Adam came to an end, the next Adam was born.[3]

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[1] The names of the two angels who examine, and if necessary punish, the dead in their graves. The righteous Muslims answer correctly all questions about their beliefs; sinners and infidels cannot. The *Qur'an* refers to the punishment in the grave indirectly, but the *hadises* frequently refer to it. *EI*, III, p. 724.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 399; Lowe, p. 413.

[3] *Mahabharata*, p. 17.

Abu'l Fazl also seeks to warn his readers about the self-contradictory material in the stories and urges them to pay attention to the spirit of the illustrative anecdotes.[4] He says:

> "If I say that all the stories embodied in the work are correct, I would be outstepping the bounds of the possibilities of physical existence. If I liken them to the stories of Amir Hamza, I shall not be doing injustice to the work."[5]

In the *A'in i-Akbari*, he puts forth the same point of view:

> "Although this work contains numerous extravagant tales and fictions based on imagination, it affords many instructive moral observations, and is an ample record of felicitous experience."[6]

"According to him the most important part of the work, constituting three-fourths of the whole, is that embodying philosophical, political and ethical teachings. He therefore advises his readers to concentrate their thought mainly on this vital part of the work and not to take the anecdotes literally. The political, spiritual and philosophical teaching of Bhishma in the sixth *parvan* was of considerable interest to Abu'l Fazl. He felt that the translators had not been able to do adequate justice to this section and wished to evaluate it in the light of the philosophy of Greek and Arab thinkers, but gave up the idea, for this would have made the preface prolix and unduly lengthy.[1]

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[1] A post-Vedic deity who is the creator and the first god of the later Hindu triad, Vishnu the preserver and Siva the destroyer, being the other two. Walker, Benjamin, *Hindu World* (London, 1968), I, pp. 164-66.

[2] *Mahabharata*, p. 20.

[3] *AN*, I, p. 52.

[4] *Mahabharata*, p. 29.

[5] He asserts that the changing pattern of human civilization should not arouse scepticism or doubts in anybody's mind, and that the events of past history should be rationally examined.

[6] *A'in*, II, p. 137.

We do not know which of the many texts of the *Mahabharata*, differing from region to region, was the one used by the translators. It seems likely that they used the text prevalent in the Agra region. When the Bhandarkar Research Institute at Poona commenced the work of collecting and collating the manuscripts of the *Mahabharata*, it could obtain only sixteen dated manusscripts, ranging from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The oldest dated manuscript was a Nepalese manuscript of 1511; two others were transcribed in 1519 and 1528 respectively.[2] The fourth, dated 1598, was made after the Persian translation was completed. This makes the Persian translation of the *Mahabharata* an important contribution from the point of view of the text too, giving an insight into what was the accepted text of the period.

The Ramayana

The translation of the *Ramayana* was undertaken by 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni on the orders of Akbar in 992/1584-85 and completed in 997/1589-90. It seems that he was called upon to translate it by himself, except for the help of the brahman interpreters. Again he found the stories indicating the great antiquity of the world challenging to his conscience. He says:

> "And the opinion of this set of people (the Hindus) is that the world is very old, and that no age has been devoid of the human race, and that from the event (the period of the *Ramayana*) 100,000 years have passed. And yet for all that they do not believe in Adam, the father of the human race, whose creation took place only 7,000 years ago. Hence it is evident that these events are either not true at all and nothing but tales of pure fiction and imagination like the *Shah Nama* and the stories of Amir Hamza, or else they must have happened in the time of the dominion of the beasts and the jinns."[3]

To Abu'l Fazl on the other hand, the philosophical teachings of the *Ramayana* were of much educative value.[4]

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[1] *Mahabharata*, pp. 17-18.

[2] Sukthankar, Vishnu S. *The Mahabharata*, I (Poona, 1933), p.vi.

[3] *MT*, II, pp. 336-37.

[4] *Ain*, I, p. 77.

The draft translation ran into 70 *juz* but the final version comprised 120 *juz*. Badauni was ordered to contribute a preface to it "after the manner of authors," presumably like the one Abu'l Fazl wrote for the *Mahabharata*. He therefore imagined that the preface would have to be written without praise of the Prophet Muhammad. This was too much for him to bear; he therefore did not undertake it.[1]

The *Harivamsa Purana*, the nineteenth *sarvan* or supplement to the *Mahabharata*, was translated by an eminent Persian poet Mulla Sheri.[2] The translation of Valmiki's Sanskrit work *Yogavasishtha* is generally ascribed to Faizi, but Abu'l Fazl does not mention it in his list of translations made under the auspices of Akbar. An illustrated copy of the work in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin is dated 1602. The illustrations are also signed by painters of Akbar's reign.[3] Though we cannot authoritatively ascribe the translation to Faizi, his popularity as a translator of Sanskrit works stimulated anonymous scholars to translate Sanskrit classics and sell them as his work. Thus the authorship of a treatise on *Vedanta* philosophy based on the *Yogavasishtha*,[4] the *Bhagavata Purana* and other Sanskrit works, entitled *Shariqu'l a'rifat*, is also ascribed to Faizi,[5] but was apparently compiled in Shah Jahan's reign.

The success that Akbar obtained in his scheme for the Persian translation of Sanskrit works is remarkable. None of the translators had studied Sanskrit; Faizi's knowledge of the language was only superficial. The Sanskrit scholars explained the original to the Persian scholars, who made the translations into a literary language. It is also noteworthy that a number of Sanskrit scholars who could explain the complex ideas of the original in Persian had been assembled. The terminology of Persian sufic works greatly helped the translators in making their translations intelligible. Apart from Faizi, Abu'l Fazl, Naqib Khan and Fathu'llah Shirazi, none of the Muslim translators was interested in the contents of the originals. Badauni, decidedly one of the best translators, loathed performing his task. He considered the scheme for the translation of Sanskrit classics to be a deliberate conspiracy against Islam. Each time a new work was assigned to him, he was overcome by an attack of acute depression. Every time he had to seek God's pardon for associating himself with the translation of the religious works of the "despised Hindus." He concludes his account of the translation of the *Mahabharata* in his *Mumtakhabu't Tawarikh:*

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 366. [2] *A'in*, I, p. 77.

[3] Barret, Douglas and Basil Grey, *Indian Painting*.

[4] The translation was made by Nizam Panipati for Prince Salim at the end of Akbar's reign. A translation of the work made by Sufi Sharif was dedicated to Jahangir. Study of these works induced Jahangir and other scholars of the seventeenth century to identify Sufism with *Vedanta*.

[5] I.O. Ms. 1355.

> "Most of the scholars who were engaged as interpreters or translators of the work are being questioned for their deeds in their after-life, like the associates of the Kurus and Pandus. To those who are still alive, may God grant deliverance, and grace to repent, and may He accept the excuse of 'whoso after he hath believed in God denies him; if he were forced to it and if his heart remains steadfast in the faith (shall be guiltless). Verily He is the merciful Pardoner.'"[1]

After giving an account of the completion of the translation of the *Ramayana,* he wrote:

> "And from that black book (the *Ramayana*), which is naught like the book of my life, I flee to God for refuge. The translation of heresy is not heresy; I repeat the declaration to exonerate myself from the sins of heresy; for I fear lest this book, which I have reluctantly written in obedience to the imperial command, should bring a curse on me."[2]

Once someone asked Hajji Sultan Thaneswari about his translation of the *Mahabharata*. He replied, "I am translating what was well known ten thousand years ago into the modern tongue."[3] Mulla Sheri felt that the far-fetched fables in the *Mahabharata* resembled the dreams of one stricken with fear.[4]

Faizi and Abu'l Fazl on the other hand took a genuine interest in the scheme. Faizi also made a poetical paraphrase of the first two *parvans* of the *Mahabharata* which he had already rendered into ornamental prose.[5] He wrote a *masnawi* entitled *Nala-Daman,* comprising more than 4,000 hemstichs. This work describes the romance of Nala, the king of Nishada or Malwa, and Damayanti, the daughter of the King of Vidarbha, in touching poetry.

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 312. [2] *Ibid*, p. 367.
[3] *MT*, III, p. 119. [4] Ethe, 1945.

In fact he undertook to write *Nala-Daman* in connection with a plan for writing a *khamsa* or collection of five *masnawis* in imitation of the *khamsa* of Nizami Ganjawi (535/1141-605/1209). He started the composition of all the five *masnawis* at the same time and wrote several sections of each work, but completed *Nala-Daman* in four months and presented it to Akbar on 1 Dai of 39 Divine Era/11 December 1594.[1] Badauni says:

> "Verily it is a *masnawi*, the like of which for the last 300 years since Mir Khusrau, no poet in India has composed."[2]

The work did not form part of the scheme for the translations, but its execution would have been impossible without the production of the translation of the *Mahabharata*, from which the story is derived.

What is significant in Faizi's *Nala-Daman* is a long encomium on the Prophet Muhammad and an account of the *mi'raj* (Muhammad's journey to heaven) on traditional lines. Badauni says:

> "When he (Faizi) was near death he wrote, at the earnest solicitations of some of his friends, some couplets, in praise of the Prophet and of his *mi'raj*, and incorporated them in the *Nala-Daman*."[3]

Faizi's encomium on Muhammad is not a later addition, for it is written in the same strain as is the rest of the work. It served as a model for subsequent poetical works on Hindu themes written by Muslim and Hindu scholars.

All the translations of Sanskrit works prepared in Akbar's reign were illustrated by the court painters. The Rajput chiefs and the Mughal nobles also had illustrated copies made for their private libraries. One of the copies of the *Mahabharata* made for the imperial library is now in the possession of the Maharaja of Jaipur. Its illustrations seem to have been made between 1584 and 1589.[4] An illustrated copy of the *Ramayana* was made from Akbar's original in 1598-99 for 'Abdu'r Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, and is now in the Freer Gallery, Washington.[5] The illustrations must have aroused interest in the contents of the works.

The Sanskrit translations of Akbar's reign provided a new intellectual outlet for the energies of later Persian scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Several independent translations of other Sanskrit works were made in the reigns of Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, besides the works that Dara Shukoh had rendered into Persian. 'Abdu'r Rahman Chishti (died 1094/1683) syncretized the Hindu theories of cosmogony in his *Mir'atu'l-Makhluqat*[1] and gave an Islamising explanation of the *Bhagavadgita* in his *Mir'atu'l Haqa'iq.*[2] *Masnawis* on Rama and Sita, some comprising free translations of the *Ramayana*, were also composed. Most outstanding are those written by Girdhar Kayath and Shaikh Sa'du'llah Masih[3] who flourished in Jahangir's reign. From the later part of the seventeenth century, Tulsi Das began to receive greater attention from the translators, and translations of his *Ramayana* were also made.

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 661.
[2] *MT*, II, p. 396.
[3] *MT*, III, p. 306.
[4] *Indian, Painting* pp. 83-84.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 96.

Several original works on the fine arts, sciences and the philosophy of the Hindus were also written. The most noteworthy is the *Tuhfatul Hind* composed by Mirza Muhammad ibn Fakhru'd Din Muhammad, in the reign of Aurangzeb, at the request of Kukultash Khan for the emperor's son, Prince Muhammad Mu'izzu'd Din who later ruled for eleven months as Jahandar Shah.[4]

The colophons and the notes on the fly-leaves of the available manuscripts of the Persian translations indicate that both Hindus and Muslims had them transcribed, and illustrated and purchased them. The Hindus, mainly those associated with the civil administration such as the kayasthas and the brahmanas, took a keen interest in the works. They helped them to understand the spirit of their religion independently. Among the Muslim educated classes, even the 'ulama owned Persian translations of Hindu religious works. As late as the early twentieth century, one or two Persian translations of Hindu religious works were invariably found in the homes of kayastha families in the U.P.

The Rajatarangini

Akbar's interest was not confined only to religious works. He was deeply interested in historical works too. *Rajatarangini*, the metrical history of Kashmir by Kalhana, completed in 1148-49, and its continuations, stimulated Akbar's interest in the ancient history and culture of Kashmir, which was annexed by him to the Mughal empire in 1586. Mulla Shah Muhammad of Shahabad, a learned scholar who had for some time served as the *sadr* of the Punjab, was commissioned to translate it into Persian.[1] According to Abu'l Fazl, the work was translated from Kashmiri,[2] it seems that the translation of the original Sanskrit into Kashmiri, apparently made in Sultan Zainu'l 'Abidin's reign, was utilised. Subsequently Badauni was ordered to rewrite it in a literary style. He completed the work in two months in 999/1590-91.[3]

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[1] Written in 1631-32; it contains a dialogue between Mahadev and Parbati on Hindu cosmogony (Ms. Rieu, III, 1034a).

[2] Ms. Rieu, III, 1044a.

[3] Br. Museum Ms. or 1883; Rieu 1033.

[4] Ethe, 2011.

Katha Sarit Sagara

In 1003/1594-95, Badauni translated a collection of Sanskrit stories, a portion of which had already been translated into Persian at the instance of Sultan Zainu'l 'Abidin and was entitled *Bahru'l Asmar* (Ocean of Stories). First of all Badauni was ordered to translate the last portions of the work which had not been rendered into Persian. He was required to complete it in five months. One night, while he was busy on the translation, the Emperor summoned him to his private bedroom and kept him answering questions about it till morning. Subsequently the Emperor ordered that the first volume of the work, which was in an archaic Persian, should also be rewritten in a more lucid style. Badauni hoped to complete the work within two or three months, but the abrupt ending of the *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh* has left us in the dark about its completion. The title of the original is also not given by Badauni.[4] Lowe thinks it was the *Rajatarangini*[5] but this work had already been translated and it would not have been taken up again. It was most probably the *Katha Sarit Sagara.*

Kalila Wa Dimna

This Sanskrit work, written as an Indian "mirror for princes" to instruct them in the art of government through fables about animals, had already been rendered in Arabic several times. The first complete Persian translation was made by Nizamu'd Din Abu'l Ma'ali Nasru'llah bin Muhammad in 1144. Husain Wa'iz Kashifi revised Nasru'llah's version, but instead of making it

[1] *MT*, II, p. 374.
[2] *A'in*, I, p. 77.
[3] *MT*, II, p. 374.
[4] *MT*, II, p. 401.
[5] Lowe, p. 415, n.2.

lucid, he made it exceedingly verbose and rhetorical. Akbar ordered Abu'l Fazl to rewrite it in simple Persian. He completed it, in sixteen chapters with a conclusion, on 15 Sha'ban 996/10 July 1588[1] and gave it the title *Iyar i-Danish* (Touchstone of Wisdom). Its short sentences and simple prose stands as a great contrast to the long and involved sentences of his diplomatic correspondence and the *Akbar Nama.*

Astronomy and Mathematics

Next to works on religion and history, Akbar took an interest in astronomy and mathematics. Three Sanskrit works on astronomy were translated into Persian by Amir Fathu'lluh Shirazi and Shaikh Abu'l Fazl. The names Kishn Joshi, Gangadhar and Mahesh Mahanand given in the *A'in i-Akbari* seem to be the names of the authors.[2] The most important is Faizi's Persian translation of Bhaskaracarya's *Lilavati*, a work on arithmetic and geometry. Faizi completed it in 995/1587.[3]

Arabic Works

Though Sanskrit works increasingly engaged Akbar's attention; Arabic was not neglected. *Mu'jamu'l-Buldan*, an encyclopaedic work on geography with stories relating to the wonders of the world was brought to the Emperor's notice by Hakim Humam. About ten or twelve scholars were selected to translate it. Of them Mulla Ahmad of Thatta, Qasim Beg, Shaikh Munawwar and Mulla 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni are noteworthy.[4]

In Rabi' I 1001/December 1592, Badauni in consultation with Shaikh Abu'l Fazl made a summary translation of the *Jami' Rashidi*, a voluminous Arabic work on the prophets, Muhammad, Umaiyad and the 'Abbasid Caliphs.[5] The Arabic works selected for translation tend to show that Akbar took interest only in the historical and scientific works written in Arabic.

Turkish

The *Babur Nama*, in Chaghta'i Turkish, a mine of information relating to Central Asia, Kabul and India, was of an absorbing interest for the Indian Timurids. The portions relating to the Indian period of Babur's autobiography had already been trans-

[1] *A'in*, I, p. 77. [2] *Ain*, I, p. 76. [3] Ethe, 1968.
[4] *MT*, II, p. 375. [5] *Ibid*

lated by his *sadr*, Zainu'd Din Khwafi, into Persian.[1] In 994/1584 Mirza Payandah Hasan Ghaznavi commenced its translation at the insistence of Bihruz Khan (who was afterwards given the title of Naurang Khan by Akbar and died as a governor of Junagarh in 1002/1593-94), but he could not translate the account beyond the first sixth and a part of the seventh year. Subsequently one Muhammad Quli Mughal Hisari continued the work and brought it down to 935/1528-29.[2] Akbar ordered Mirza 'Abdu'r Rahim Khan i-Khanan to translate it again and he completed the work in 998/1589. He presented his translation to the Emperor as he was returning from Kabul[3] on 24 November 1589. The Khan i-Khanan excelled all the previous translators.

Christian Works

No works of Christian theology were taken up for translation at the *Maktab Khana*, though Akbar exhibited increasing interest in Christianity, Father Jerome Xavier, who on 5 May 1595 arrived with the third Jesuit mission at Akbar's court in Lahore, and remained in attendance on Akbar till his death, studied Persian for about seven years and made the translation of Christian works into Persian possible. He composed a work in Portuguese based on the Gospels which at the instance of Akbar he translated at Agra in collaboration with one Maulana 'Abdu's Sattar bin Qasim Lahauri. The work was entitled *Mir'atu'l Quds* (The Mirror of Holiness) or *Dastan i-Masih* (Life of Christ) and was completed in 1602.[4]

This aroused Akbar's interest in the lives of the Apostles and he ordered Father Xavier to compile a work on them. The Father first wrote it in Portuguese and then translated it into Persian with the help of Maulana 'Abdu's Sattar. It was named the *Dastan i-Ahwal i-Hawariyan*[5] (Lives of the Apostles). It comprised the accounts of S.S. Peter, Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James the Less, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Jude, and Matthias. The biographical notes on the first four of these were submitted to Akbar before his death, and the rest of the work was presented to Jahangir first at Lahore in 1607 and later on at Agra in 1609.

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[1] Storey, pp. 532-33.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 533.

[3] *AN*, III, p. 570.

[4] Sachau and Ethe, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, No. 364.

[5] *Ibid*, No. 365.

A'ina i-Haq Numa (The Truth-Showing Mirror) an exceedingly controversial work was commenced by Xavier before 1902 but it was completed in Jahangir's reign and dedicated to him.[1] Maclagan says:

> "The treatise is written in the form of a dialogue between a padre and a philosopher or freethinker whom he purports to have met at Court—a thinly veiled personification of Akbar himself—while at times a mulla intervenes as a third interlocutor.[2]

Finding the work rather voluminous, Xavier prepared an abridgment entitled *Muntahab i-A'ina i-Haq Numa.*[3] The work seems to have formed the source of the *Dabistan i-Mazhahib*, on which the author's imaginary dialogues between the members of different faith at Akbar's court seem to have been based.[4]

Samratu'l-Filasfa

Akbar's unquenchable thirst for a knowledge of religion, philosophy and history led him to take an interest in the philosophy of the West, particularly that of Greeks. From his letter to the king of Portugal, what he expected was to receive a deputation of thinkers who could discuss religion and history in his court objectively. The Fathers who came belied his expectations. He accordingly encouraged their collaborator, 'Abdu's Sattar, to learn Portuguese and translate books for him. The latter, given this impulse, translated Portuguese excerpts embodying an account of Greece and Rome and biographical notes on Greek philosophers. The work was named *Samratu'l-Filasfa* (The Fruit of Philosophy).[5]

The translations prepared under Akbar's patronage gave a new dimension to Indian Persian, which had already acquired a distinctive character. Its Impact was felt by a vast majority of the elite of those days; its administrative and philosophical concepts percolated down to several regional languages and enriched them. The typical Mughal culture would have been much poorer without this intellectual and artistic contribution.

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[1] British Museum Ms. Harl. 5478, Rieu, I, 4.

[2] *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p. 207.

[3] British Museum Ms. Add. 23, 58.

[4] *Dabistan i-Mazahib*, pp. 316-17.

[5] *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p. 204.

CHAPTER 7

HISTORIANS AND HISTORIES OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE IN AKBAR'S REIGN*

By the sixteenth century India had developed a Perso-Islamic tradition of historical writing. The tone and standard were first set in India by the *Tabaqat i-Nasiri*[1] of Minhaj Abu 'Umar Usman bin Siraj and the *Taj'ul-Ma'asir*[2] of Sadru'd Din Muhammad bin Hasan Nizami. Ziya'u'd Din Barani[3] preferred to follow the ancient Persian traditions of writing dynastic history and allowed his treatment of his subject to be influenced by two main trends of Islamic historiography—the "Judaeo-Christian" or "Biblical" traditions and the Islamic tradition of biographical writing.

The Biblical tradition recognised history as "God's plan for the salvation of humanity." It gave a specific orientation to value judgment:

> "Whenever human actions are good and reflect true belief in God, prosperity will be the reward for them; if they are evil and actions of unbelief, punishment and destruction will follow. Reward and punishment may take place in this world or in life after death. The reality of mundane reward and punishment can be illustrated from history and is known from experience."[4]

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*This study excludes the histories of the provincial dynasties.

[1] Minhaju'd Din Abu 'Umar 'Usman bin Siraj, an outstanding authority on the history of the Ghurids, left for India in 1227 and reached Uchch'; thence he came to Delhi in 1228. He held high offices under Sultan Iltutmish and his successors and wrote *Tabaqat i-Nasiri*, a general history, most of the work appears to have been done in 1259 and 1260.

[2] Hasam Nizami of Nishapur wrote *Taju'l Ma'asir*, a rhetorical account of the Indian wars of Mu'izzu'd Din Muhammad bin Sam (1191-1206) and Qutbu'd Din Aibak (1206-10). The account is brought down to 1217; Storey, pp. 492-93.

[3] Ziya'u'd Din Barani, born about 1285, completed his *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi* from Balban to the sixth year of Firuz Shah's reign, in 1357.

[4] F. Rosenthal, The Influence of the Biblical Tradition on Muslim Historiography in B. Lewis and P. M. Holt, *Historians of the Middle East*

These traditions influenced both Quranic commentaries and *Hadis* and reacted powerfully upon Islamic historical writings. On Barani they had incalculable influence.

Islamic biographical traditions are, as Professor Gibb says, "the wholly indigenous creation of the Islamic community." Even when anecdotes predominate, they present the individual "in a variety of circumstances and attitudes" and do not involve the writers in personal judgment.[1] To quote Professor Gibb again:

> "Given the religious and literary interests of the great majority of biographers, it is evident that they provide the fullest and most complete detail for the religious and intellectual life of the Muslim Community throughout its history, including educational and (thanks to the biographies of *hukama*) scientific activities. Without these works, indeed, no detailed study of Islamic culture would be possible."[2]

The Mughals introduced into India the traditions of the historians of the various Mongol dynasties, who were secretaries and ministers and therefore had access to vast archival material and copious other information, both secret and public. Of these the *Tarikh i-Jahan Kusha*[3] introduced a new style of writing historical monograph in ornate prose. Its author 'Ala'u'd Din 'Ata Malik Juwaini (1226-83) obtained a singular success in presenting an objective evaluation and asessment of the personality and institutions of Chingiz (born 1167, died 1227) who was not only an enemy of Islam but was regarded as an scourge of God on earth. *Wassaf i-Hazrat* or *Tarikh i-Wassaf* of 'Abdu'llah ibn Fazlu'llah, an officer in the revenue department of the Mongols, is a valuable work but artificial, tedious and redundant in style. However, most remarkable is the contribution of his patron, Rashidu'd Din Fazlu'llah (1247-1318) a minister of Ghazan Khan (1295-1304).

(London, 1962), p. 36.

[1] Sir Hamilton Gibb, Islamic Biographical Literature in *Historians of the Middle East*, p. 57.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 58.

[3] 'Ala'u'd Din 'Ata Malik Juwaini (1225-83) wrote *Tarikh i-jahan Kusha* (The History of the World Conqueror) in 1260. It comprises a history of the Mongols from the rise of Chingiz Khan to the expedition of Hulagu Khan against the Isma'ilis in 654/1256. A fine English translation by Dr. J. A. Boyle, was published in two volumes by the Manchester University Press, in 1958.

His *Jami'u't Tawarikh* draws upon the voluminous archives of the State and the collaboration of a large number of experts in the history and antiquities of the Mongols and other scholars of different faiths such as Kamlashri, a Kashmiri hermit who is the main source for his account of Sakyamuni, that is, Buddha.[1]

Both the Perso-Islamic and the Mongol traditions of historiography are reflected in the works of history which Akbar's interest in historical writings called forth during his reign. The *Akbar Nama,* like the *Jami'u't Tawarikh*, represents a broadly based view of history while Badauni's *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh* adheres to the Perso-Islamic traditions of Barani with whose character, as well as method and aim, the author has much in common. The *Tarikh i-Alfi* occupies a special character because it pursues a purpose laid down by a superior authority.

Abu'l Fazl defines history as a collection of the events of the world recorded in chronological sequence; and the historian as one proficient in knowledge thereof. He states that India and Khita (Northern China), the Franks, the Jews and other nations had their own historians, and offers a selection from historians who wrote in Arabic and Persian.[2] In the conclusion of the *Akbar Nama* he says:

> "Chronicles unfold the feasts and fights *(bazm-razm)*, the strivings and sports, the glooms, and the glories and other things relating to the knowledge of mankind and civilisation, the prespicacities of the wise, the mistakes of the learned, the various vicissitudes of the world, the simplicities of the great of the earth, the vain knockings at the door of inaccessible Fortune, the empty satisfactions of many members of the households of Reason and Testimony, and other singularities of the wonderful world. They also record many experiments and lessons in a pleasing and impressive manner. If enlightenment be brought to the task (of chronicle writing) and regard be had to what is proper, a second life is bestowed on the inquiring and the laborious, such as they died wishing for, and the materials of eternal existence are gathered. . . Moreover, in the spicery of varied traditions there are remedies for melancholy, and medicines for sorrow. Such

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[1] S. A. A. Rizvi, Review of Karl Jahn, Rashid al-Din's History of India *Indo-Iranian Journal*, pp. 48-51.

[2] *A'in*, I, pp. 194-95.

agreeable electuaries are indispensably necessary in the social state (*nishah i-t 'alluq*)."[1]

Badauni considers history a noble science and an elegant discipline, a treasury full of lessons for men of knowledge and a source of experience for the wise and farsighted. While its study has led astray some whose faith is not firm, he considers worthy of attention only historians whose belief in the shari'a is strongly rooted. Others, whom he calls "the shortsighted" or "misguided", can learn no lesson from history; among them are the Shi'is, who impudently reject the orthodox Sunni belief in the process of the selection of the first four successors of the Prophet. "Of black character themselves, they impute to the dissensions among the Pious Caliphs motives as vile as their own low minds."[2]

Badauni himself tells of a conversation he had with Abu'l Fazl indicating that to Abu'l Fazl history of Islam meant more than a mere account of the Prophet Muhammad and his successors. Badauni pictures himself as defending the viewpoint of the Muslim historians. Abu'l Fazl said to Badauni that Muslim historians had written annalistic account of their Prophet; why did they not write equally detailed histories of other prophets? Badauni drew Abu'l Fazl's attention to the category of works entitled *Qisasu'l Anbiya*,[3] but Abu'l Fazl rejected Badauni's defence and said that they were too sketchy; detailed histories ought to have been written. Badauni replied that because of the great antiquity of the pre-Islamic prophets only what could be ascertained with certainty was written. Abu'l Fazl replied that the question was not answered at all.[4]

To both Abu'l Fazl and Badauni, history was a useful instrument. Abu'l Fazl used it to advocate Akbar's policy of "peace with all"; Badauni, to denounce it. Badauni considered the policy responsible for creating "a complete revolution, both in legislation and in manners, greater than any of which there has been any record for the past thousand years."[5]

[1] *AN*, II, p. 378; Bev, II, pp. 548-49.

[2] *MT*, I, p. 4.

[3] The first legendary Islamic accounts of the Prophets were written in Arabic, and the earliest known version in Persian is *Qisasu'l Anbiya wa Siyar al-muluk* by Shaikh Muhammad Huwaizi, alleged to have been completed in 352/963. Subsequently many recensions were prepared (Storey, I, pp. 158-59; 70-72).

[4] *MT*, II.

[5] *Ibid.*

Among other historians who flourished in Akbar's reign, Mushtaqi and 'Abbas Khan notice "God's plan" for the salvation of Muslims in the rule of the Afghans. Mihtar Jauhar and Gulbadan Begum are memoirists rather than historians. 'Ala'u'd Daula Qazwini, 'Arif Qandahari and Bayazid Biyat make Akbar a paragon of Islamic virtues while Akbar's spectacular conquests provde Nizamu'd Din Ahmad, Faizi Sihrindi and Shaikh Nuru'l Haq with sufficient material for pride from the orthodox Sunni viewpoint of approbation of any Muslim ruler whose state is powerful and victorious; it is to God, who chooses to fulfil His divine purposes through Akbar, that the true honour of Akbar's victories belongs.

Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi

No history of the Lodis and the Surs has survived from the period of their rule. It is doubtful if any such works were written; the board of compilers of the *Tarikh i-Alfi*, for example, had no history of the Lodis at their disposal,[1] and their account of the Lodis and Surs is based upon histories of the rulers of Jaunpur, Malwa and Gujarat and on the Mughal sources of information.

The earliest work that throws light on the history of the Lodis and Surs is the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi*. It incidentally incorporates accounts of Babur, Humayun and Akbar; Ghiyasu'd Din Khalji (1469-1500), and Nasiru'd Din Khalji (1500-1510) of Malwa; and Muzaffar Shah II (1511-25) of Gujarat. It is not history as such, but a collection of anecdotes of these rulers and their nobles. Stray incidents of the various reigns are based on author's own reminiscences.

Many anecdotes deal with love affairs in which the heroes and heroines suddenly lose their fleshly character and become symbols of Divine love; an idol[2] becomes as magnetically attractive to a lover's eye as a beloved. Hindu girls of different caste groups fall in love with Muslim youths,[3] leading to mutual sacrifice of their lives. They are buried separately in different graves, but the graves are later opened and the bodies of both lovers are found miraculously united.[1] Such stories are intended to convey the sufic mystery that profane and earthly love is a step leading to perfect love of God. Religious and social barriers separate the lovers only in their time; in death, they are united.

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[1] *Tarikh i-Alfi* (Ethe, 112), f. 373a.

[2] Anecdote of a soldier in Sultan Sikandar's army and an idol of Udaipur temple '*Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi* (Rieu, II, p. 802b), pp. 38-39, Rizvi, *Uttar Taimur Kalin Bharat*, I (Aligarh, 1958), pp. 123-24.

[3] *WM*, pp. 40-44; *UTKB*, I, pp. 124-27.

The author, Shaikh Rizqu'llah Mushtaqi, was descended from a distinguished family of Turks originally settled in India in the reign of 'Ala'u'd Din Khalji.[2] Some of his ancestors had wielded the sword and the pen with equal ease; some had been eminent sufis. Mushtaqi's father, Shaikh Sa'du'llah, was born at Delhi not long after 860/1455-56. Under Sultan Sikandar Lodi, he joined the service of a leading noble, Zainu'd Din, and even after Sultan Ibrahim Lodi dismissed his master, Sa'du'llah continued in his service with unabated enthusiasm.[3]

Shaikh Rizqu'llah was born in 827/1491-92 and became a disciple of his father's preceptor Shaikh Muhammad Mangan.[4] Later on the Shattari saint, Shaikh Budhan initiated him;[5] and like all other saints of this order Mushtaqi studied Sanskrit and Hindu mythology and mysticism. The spiritual and intellectual trends of fifteenth century northern India had deeply influenced his mind. Enthusiastic study of the legends of Amir Hamza, and other legendary tales, both Islamic and non-Islamic, had made him gullible and superstitious. He wrote poetry in Persian under the name of Mushtaqi, and in Hindi as Rajan. The names of two Hindi works he wrote, *Joti Niranjan* and *Paiman*,[6] survive; but the works themselves do not.

He served several Afghan nobles, among them was Miyan Mujib son of Miyan Husain Farmuli;[7] he acted as *imam* to Lad Khan son of Ahmad Khan;[8] he lived on intimate terms with many other prominent Afghans. Their prodigal munificence towards him and other 'ulama, sayids and sufis made Mushtaqi exceedingly respectful to their memory. In Akbar's reign he used to relate his reminiscences to his friends and admirers; naturally they aroused the nostalgic pride of Afghans dreaming of the revival of their past glory. Shortly before his death in 989AH/1581, at the insistent demand of his friends, he compiled his recollections under the title of the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi*.[9]

[1] *WM*, pp. 39-40; *UTKB*, I, p. 124.
[2] *AA*, p. 299.
[3] *WM*, p. 58; *UTKB*, I, p. 40.
[4] *AA*, pp. 174, 300.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 200.
[6] *AA*, p. 174.
[7] *WM*, (Ms. Rieu, II 820b), f. 24 b.
[8] WM, f. 36b.
[9] *WM*, pp. 2-3; *UTKB*, I p. 91.

Although it is only a collection of anecdotes, it is of great historical importance. All stories have some moral; those about Bahlul Lodi's show that early Afghan rule in India was characterised by tribal isolationism. Settling under their own chiefs in different regions of northern India, the various tribes introduced into the plains the pattern of their life in the barren mountains. Sultan Sikandar Lodi tried to assert his authority firmly, but could effect no substantial departure from the tribal way of life. Study of the anecdotes of Sultan Sikandar's reign indicates that Mushtaqi tended to belittle the achievements of Akbar, while magnifying beyond all proportion Sikandar's contributions to the development of peace and prosperity. The nobles of Sikandar's reign emerge as paragons of perfection, and ordinary officers are alleged to have excelled even the saints of Akbar's reign in piety.[1] In his panegyric upon Sultan Sikandar, he says:

> The Muslims held the upper hand, the Hindus were docile
> The very name of Mongol was unknown.[2]

These lines are of deep importance, for they disclose the real expectations of the contemporary Muslim elite. They did not recommend interference with the normal life of the Hindus, far less their persecution, but they strove to establish the supremacy of Muslims in the entire administration, as several anecdotes in the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi* prove.

As a prince, Sultan Sikandar had designed a scheme to enrich the Muslims by devastating the holy Hindu centres of Kurukshetra. He hoped thus to establish his superiority over other claimants to the throne; but Miyan 'Abdu'llah Ajodhani, the most influential of the 'ulama, refused to co-operate with him, on the ground that the *shari'a* forbade interference with unbeliever's long-established religious practices.[3] Mushtaqi approves of the verdict of Miyan 'Abdu'llah.

The repeated mention of the Sultan's generosity in granting land and stipends to 'ulama, sayids and saints, and his readiness to advance the interests of this class, is not purposeless. It is intended to show in a poor light Akbar's regulations seeking to enforce strictness in the distribution of the *madad i-ma'ash*.

The anecdotes of Rizqu'llah introduce us to the system of

[1] *WM*, f. 28b. [2] *Ibid*, 40a. [3] *Ibid*, f. 9b.

recruitment of soldiers,[1] the grant of *iqta's*[2], the efficiency of the governments' secret agents[3] and the working of the judicial system.[4] Some stories glance upon the social life of villagers.[5]

His anecdotal treatment of history seems to have been copied from the style of explaining Divine Reality through symbols and allegories, which allowed sufis to expound their own view of life without much fear of criticism from the orthodox section of society. The anecdotes of the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi* unfold aspects of political tensions and social conflicts which fell outside the scope of chronologists. From them we can see that several important centres of Rajput power had emerged in Northern India. Although disunited, they were a potent challenge to Afghan military power,[6] which was unable either to subdue them completely or to effect a durable compromise.

We learn from an interesting anecdote relating to Miyan Mahmud Farmuli Kala Pahar, the governor of Awadh for most of Sikandar's reign, that there were twenty-four rajas in his territory, who once combined and rebelled. The Miyan defeated them. When he returned to Ayodhaya, his capital, the 'ulama and sufis came to receive him. Peasant women with pitchers of water on their heads joined the throng. The Muslim nobles wished to greet the 'ulama and holy men first but a Hindu suggested that they first notice the women, for it would be very auspicious. The Muslim nobles assented, greatly disappointing the 'ulama and holy saints. Said their leader Shaikh Darwesh:

> "They have ignored us and paid attention to water; now let water help them."

When the rajas rose again and the Miyan met them in the field, rain and hail began to fall. The battlefield was flooded and the Afghans, unable to manoeuvre, were defeated.[7] The moral of the story was that the Afghans' defeat was the result of their impious adoption of a Hindu social custom.

Sultan Sikandar and his nobles cultivated the Hindi language, Indian music, Ayurvedic medicine, and other arts. Miyan Taha,

[1] *WM*, f. 27b.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 50-51; *UTKB*, I, p. 133.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 28-38; *UTKB*, I, pp. 115-20.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 24, 27; *UTKB*, I, pp. 111, 113.

[5] *Ibid*, f. 37b.

[6] *Ibid*, pp. 69-70, 77-80, 125; *UTKB*, I, pp. 149-50, 156-57, 167.

[7] *Ibid*, pp. 77-78; *Ibid*, f. 37b; I, pp. 156-57.

a noble of the Sultan's court, excelled everyone in Hindu medicine and music; even brahmans were his disciples; but what Mushtaqi wants us to believe is that Miyan Taha all along believed the religion of the Hindus false, and their books worthless.[1]

Sultan Ibrahim Lodi's struggle against his brother Jalal Khan and the unwillingness of a section of Sultan Sikandar's old nobles to submit to him made party politics exceedingly complex. Mushtaqi felt deep sympathy with such nobles as Miyan Bhua[2] and A'zam Humayun Sarwani,[3] whom the Sultan's ruthlessness consigned to detention and death. He gives a touching but partisan account of Sultan Ibrahim's cruelty towards them.

What makes the account of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi's reign more interesting is the description of the shifting character of Rajput Afghan alliances and the tribal power politics. It projects an interesting image of the contradictions between personal political interest and orthodox religious sentiments. Both Saiyid Khan Yusuf Khail and Miyan Husain Farmuli, the most outstanding nobles of Sultan Sikandar, had joined Rana Sanga of Mewar. Once Saiyid Khan told the Rana that Miyan Husain Khan was a Shaikhzada and his status among Muslims resembled that of brahmans among the Hindus, while he himself belonged to the class of the Sultan's brothers. Shahu Khail and Yusuf Khail could rise to the position of a king; others lived as servants. Rana Sanga began to disregard Miyan Husain. Such personal pride rooted in tribal rivalries, alienated Miyan Husain from Rana Sanga; but Mushtaqi alleges that the Miyan deserted the Rana, and rejoined Sultan Ibrahim, out of disgust at the use of the Hindu battle cry "Rama Rama." The division among the Rana's Afghan confederates led to his defeat; Miyan Husain obtained the governorship of Chanderi where the powerful local Shaikhzadas became his enemies.[4]

The Chanderi Shaikhzadas were Indian born but Miyan Husain was the proud descendant of Shaikh Muhammad Sulaiman Dana,[5] the patron saint of the Afghans. Sultan Ibrahim Lodi revenged himself upon Miyan Husain Farmuli by encouraging the Chanderi Shaikhzadas, who defeated the Miyan in a hitched battle and killed him. This enabled Rana Sanga to annex Chanderi to his empire. Mushtaqi concludes his account with anecdotes to the effect that someone soon after dreamed that he saw Shaikh Muhammad Sulaiman without turban or cap. The holy man claimed that he had gone to Chanderi to exact vengeance from the Shaikhzadas, and would cover his head only when Ibrahim Lodi too was annihilated.[1]

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[1] *WM*, pp. 135-36; *UTKB*, I, pp. 176-77.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 63-65; 118-19; *Ibid*, I, pp. 144-45, 162-63.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 81-82; *Ibid*, I, pp. 159-60.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 121-24; *Ibid*, I, pp. 165-67.

[5] Khwaja Ni'matu'llah, *Tarikh Khan Jahani wa Makhzan i-Afghani* (Dacca, 1960), I, p. 92.

The anecdotes of the reign of Babur[2] and Humayun[3] illustrate how the Afghan resistance to the Mughal power was decentralised and individualistic, but spirited. It shows that the influence of Shaikh Ghoran over Babur brought relief both to Afghans and Indian Muslims.[4]

Mushtaqi is not unsympathetic to Humayun, stressing the Emperor's religiosity and prodigality. Once an *imam*, who had led Humayun's prayers for two years, was found in the company of some Shi'is. The Emperor banished him immediately and recited again the prayers for the whole two years.[5]

And once Hindu Beg, an outstanding Mughal noble, represented to the Emperor that the stipends and grants in *aima* tenure had reached 18,000 crores, while the soldiers were dying of hunger. Humayun reprimanded him saying that he had decided to distribute the whole of his kingdom in *aima* and to conquer some other land for himself.[6] Such tales are intended to teach a lesson to Akbar.

The revival of Afghan rule under Sher Shah does not call up much enthusiasm in Mushtaqi. Neither the Sultan nor his nobles fulfilled Mushtaqi's expectation of munificence. His anecdotes about the early life of Sher Shah[7] and the account of his conquests and consolidation of the Afghan power are objective and sober. His love of sensation preserves us an anecdote of his early life related by the Sultan himself to his captive Qadir Shah alias Mallu Khan, the former ruler of Malwa.[1]

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[1] *WM*, p. 128; *UTKB*, I, p. 170.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 84-88; S. A. A. Rizvi, *Mughul Kalin Bharat, Babur* (Aligarh, 1960), pp. 439-42.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 88-96; S. A. A. Rizvi, *Mughul Kalin Bharat, Humayun* (Aligarh, 1962), pp. 485-89.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 84-88.

[5] *Ibid*, ff. 44b-45a.

[6] *Ibid*, f. 45a.

[7] *Ibid*, (Add 11, 633), ff. 48a-b.

He rejects the belief that Farid obtained the title of Sher Khan by killing a tiger when in the service of a governor of Bihar named Darya Khan.[2] According to Mushtaqi, this title was held by the father of one of Darya Khan's nobles, Daulat Khan.[3] By ignoring the story of killing a tiger, Mushtaqi proves himself not incapable of judicious and sober selection when he chooses.

His account of Sher Shah's perfidious plan to conquer Raisen admits little doubt. Before starting from Agra, Sher Shah had obtained from Mir Saiyid Rafi'u'd Din Safari a *fatwa* justifying his proposed expedition had told him that although he would make peace for the time being with Puran Mal, and swear to give him protection, he would kill him later on.[4]

Mushtaqi describes Sher Shah's liberality; the peace and security of his rule; his construction of roads and *sara'is*; his personal attention to civil and military administration; and his care for dispensation of justice. The following achievements impressed him most:

1. Annihilation of Mahartha, the formidable chief of Bihar.
2. Complete destruction of the *kafirs* of Raisen.
3. The conquest of Jodhpur and Malwa.

Mushtaqi regards Akbar's victory over Hemu as a divine assistance to Islam.[5] He extolls Bairam Khan's efforts to restore the confidence of the Afghans in the Mughals. The appointment as *Sadru's Sudur* of Shaikh Gada'i was thus a right choice; Mushtaqi refers to him as Hajjiu'l Harmain (the Pilgrim to both Mecca and Medina); Karimu't Tarafain (venerable in both lines of descent); Shaikh bin Shaikh Bandagi Shaikhu'l Masha'ikh, Shaikh Gada'i. To Mushtaqi there was nothing remarkable in the administration of Akbar and the munificence of himself and his nobles. Even by the time he wrote, he was not sure that the Mughal power was permanently established.[6]

We may ridicule Mushtaqi for his gullibility and criticise him for his credulity, but we cannot dispense with his work. It mirrors the conditions of sixteenth century Muslim society; the strains and stress of the Afghan tribal system during their own ascendancy, and their difficulties under the Mughals. Faizi Sihrindi, the author of the *Akbar Nama* regarded Mushtaqi as an eminent historian;[1] his nephew Shaikh 'Abdu'd Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi drew upon the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi* in his *Akhbaru'l Akhyar*. 'Abbas Khan Sarwani borrowed his account of the administration of Sher Shah from him, and the Afghan historians of Jahangir's reign borrowed his material as well as imitated his style.

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[1] *WM*, (Add II' 633),53 a.
[2] *Ibid*, ff. 48a.
[3] *Ibid*, f. 48b.
[4] *Ibid*, f. 54b.
[5] *Ibid*, f. 54b, 78b.
[6] *Ibid*, ff. 79a-79b.

Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi

While the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi* seeks to highlight the achievements of Sultan Sikandar Lodi, the *Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi* of 'Abbas Khan Sarwani extols the achievements of Sher Shah Suri. Like the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi,* it is based upon its author's reminiscences, and the monologues put on the lips of eminent Afghan nobles, whom the author knew, and who like the heroes of the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi* had died long ago, tell the story of the greatness of Sher Shah. Both Mushtaqi and 'Abbas Khan belonged to the class of *'ulama* and sufis who treasured nostalgic memories of their affluence under the Afghans, and, as they wrote, both were brooding over those vanished days of glory. Both authors seem to have chosen their respective styles of presenting historical truth in a deliberate effort to make their works inoffensive to Mughal sentiments.

Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi is dedicated to Akbar, and hence its name, but the date of its beginning or completion is not known. In the 24th Divine year (March 1579 to March 1580) 'Abbas Khan lost his ancestral *madad i-ma'ash* grant at Banur, and in November 1586, his patron Mir Saiyid Hamid Bukhari died. Fighting against the Roshana'is[2] these two events are incidentally mentioned in the *Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi,* the former being dated[3] and the latter not.[4] It is possible that the work was written about the 31st Divine year and was intended to serve as source material for the *Tarikh i-Alfi.* We may not be unjustified in presuming that it was written at the instance of Mir Saiyid Hamid Bukhari.

'Abbas Khan bin Shaikh 'Ali bin Shaikh Bayazid Kakpuri was descended from an illustrious family of Sarwani saints of Roh. Shaikh Bayazid was the successor of Shaikh Ahmad,[5] a descendant of Shaikh Mulhi Qattal, the son of the celebrated Shaikh Sulaiman. The Afghans paid great respect to the family of Shaikh Mulhi Qattal; even respecting the sanctuary of criminals who sought protection in their house.[1]

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[1] *FS*, f. 2a. [2] *AN*, III, p. 510; Bev, III, pp. 777-78.

[3] *Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi* or *The Tarikh -i Sher Shahi* edited by S. M. Imamu'd Din (Dacca, 1964), p. 168. [4] *TAS*, p. 169. [5] *TAS*, p. 166.

Shaikh Bayazid's father, Shaikh Raju, was assigned some land at Banur near Sihrind, but in Babur's reign he abandoned it and returned to his ancestral hills.[2] In 1541, Sher Shah, in pursuit of Humayun, camped at Khushab for about two months. Shaikh Bayazid visited him. Sher Shah, who had abandoned the relative informality of the courts of Bahlol and Sikandar, surprised Bayazid by welcoming him warmly and restoring his grant at Banur.[3] In February-May 1542 he paid a second visit during Sher Shah's expedition to Ujjain and Sarangpur and was awarded 2000 *bighas* of land in the *pargana* of Banur.[4] In May 1545 when Sher Shah was besieging Kalinjar, Bayazid again visited him, and was promised Multan and Sind, which were under the Baluchis.[5] Sher Shah's death frustrated the fulfilment of this promise, but Islam Shah confirmed Bayazid's holdings in Banur.[6] In the 24th Divine year (1579-80) he was given a *mansab* of 500 and presented to Akbar. Qazi 'Ali did not press the eminence of 'Abbas Khan's ancestors upon the Emperor, and the *madad i-ma'ash* was consequently resumed. 'Abbas Khan decided to return to Roh, but Mir Saiyid Hamid Bukhari, by visiting his house, persuaded him to enter the Mughal service.[7] Ultimately, his monthly salary was fixed at 200 rupees and he was exempted from complying with the *dagh* regulations. In 1586 Mir Saiyid Hamid was killed near Bikram (Peshawar); 'Abbas Khan seems to have lost his employment, and no information about his last days is available.

'Abbas Khan's family was intimately associated with Masnad i-'Ali 'Umar Khan Sarwani, his son Haibat Khan and grandson Khan i-A'zam Masnad-i'Ali 'Isa Khan. Banur, Shahabad, and Pa'il in the *sarkar* of Sihrind had been held by 'Umar Khan;[8] under whom Sher Shah's father Miyan Hasan started his career. After 1531 'Isa Khan and many eminent Afghans such as A'zam Humayun Sarwani and Qutb Khan Mauji Khail joined Sher Shah.

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 160.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 167.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 166.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 167.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 167-68.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 168.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 169.
[8] *WM*, pp. 17-20; *UTKB*, I, pp. 105-08.
[9] *TAS*, p. 96.

When Humayun was pursuing Sher Shah in 1538, 'Isa Khan and his nephew Khan i-A'zam Muzaffar Khan suffered considerable hardships.[1] According to 'Abbas Khan, it was 'Isa Khan who suggested, after Sher Shah's victory at the battle of Chausa, that he assume the kingship, ignoring old tribal sentiments and reorganising the administration on sound lines.[2] Sher Shah sent him on diplomatic missions to Malwa and Gujarat.[3] In the battle of Bilgram of 1540, he served in the centre of Sher Shah's army.[4] He was later on appointed governor of Sambhal where he suppressed rebellious chiefs, restored peace, introduced the revenue regulations then current around Delhi, and realised revenue on the basis of measurement of the land.[5] He gave protection to Bairam Khan, took him to Sher Shah and urged the king to be kind to the fallen enemy general.[6] According to 'Abbas Khan, Bairam never forgot the debt he owed to 'Isa Khan, but the proud Afghan accepted no favours from Bairam Khan.[7]

The principal source of 'Abbas Khan's information was Khan-i Azam Muzaffar Khan, who was a nephew of 'Isa Khan, and whose daughter 'Abbas had married.[8] On Muzaffar Khan's authority, the author seeks to contradict the popular belief that Sher Shah's men seized Rohtas fort by posing as women enclosed in litters.[9] Muzaffar Khan is also an authority for several other facts; for example, the account of Sher Shah's personal interest in the welfare of cultivators and the promotion of agriculture.[10]

Some members of 'Abbas Khan's family were near relations of Sher Shah. One was Miyan Hussu, the husband of Sher Shah's sister.[11] Sher Shah had given him the title of Dariya Khan, but he died in the early years of his reign.[12] Shaikh Muhammad, a grandson of Shaikh Mulhi Qattal was another relative of 'Abbas Khan.[13] At the time of the compilation of the *Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi*, he was eighty years old. On his authority, 'Abbas Khan relates how Sher Shah used to boast in Babur's camp that if fortune favoured him, he could expel Babur from India.[14] Many events related by Muzaffar Khan were confirmed by Shaikh Muhammad.[15] Other relations of 'Abbas Khan told him

[1] *TAS*, pp. 10-1.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 140.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 144.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 150.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 158, 213-14.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 160.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 162.
[8] *Ibid*.
[9] *Ibid*, p. 111.
[10] *Ibid*, p. 223.
[11] *Ibid*, pp. 61-62.
[12] *Ibid*, p. 62.
[13] *Ibid*, p. 55.
[14] *Ibid*, p. 56.
[15] *Ibid*, p. 62.

how Sher Shah had gained control of the fort of Chunar.[1] His uncle Saiyid Khan Kakpuri was ordered to seize the fort of Kalinjar by Sher Shah.[2]

The *Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi* begins with an account of Sultan Bahlol's efforts to consolidate the Afghan rule in India. Dealing with the immigration of Farid's (Sher Shah's) grandfather, Miyan Ibrahim and his father Miyan Hasan, 'Abbas Khan makes a passing reference to Farid's birth, but offers no date.[3] He gives a fairly detailed account of Farid's departure from his father's house for Jaunpur and his early education there,[4] but offers a dramatic and probably inaccurate version of Farid's father's sudden decision, about the time of Sultan Sikandar's death, to entrust the administration of his *parganas* to him.[5] The account of Farid's administration of the *parganas* and the invaluable experience he gained of the duties of government, is not, on the face of it, unreliable.[6] The knowledge of the Sarwanis who told 'Abbas Khan of Farid's early career was slight, so the early portion of the work is sketchy and confusing. For events happening after 1538, his sources are richer and more varied. He does not fail to point out Humayun's breach of faith in his dealings with Sher Shah.[7] He presents a very confused topography of Chausa[8] but his narrative of the battle of Bilgram is clear and plausible.[9] The flight of the Mughals and Sher Shah's pursuit have been dealt with very briefly, but the account of Sher Shah's administration of trans-Indus regions is lively and detailed.[10] 'Abbas Khan's efforts to absolve Sher Shah of breach of his oath to Puran Mal of Raisen[11] are unsuccessful. He gives interesting details of Sher Shah's conquest of Marwar;[12] the siege of Kalinjar and the death of Sher Shah.[13]

He concludes the account of Sher Shah's reign with a detailed description of his administrative reforms, incorporating on the whole, the corresponding portions in the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi*. Both however, employ such technical terms as *faujdar*, *mansabdar*, *jagir*, and *zamindar* which did not come into official use until Akbar's reign.

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[1] *TAS*, p. 80.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 203.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.
[4] *Ibid*, pp. 13-14.
[5] *Ibid*, pp. 15-16.
[6] *Ibid*, pp. 17-19.
[7] *Ibid*, pp. 114-16.
[8] *Ibid*, pp. 137-88.
[9] *Ibid*, pp. 148-56.
[10] *Ibid*, pp. 166-170.
[11] *Ibid*, pp. 183-84.
[12] *Ibid*, 193-99.
[13] *Ibid*, pp. 201-03.

'Abbas Khan offers further details of Sher Shah's liberality towards Afghans. In his reign, the blind, the aged, widows, cripples, and the sick were paid stipends in cash out of the *jizyah* realised from their native towns.[1] Sher Shah believed that the prosperity of the towns and the kingdom depended upon giving patronage to holy men; but, recognising their fraudulent practices in appropriating *madad i-ma'ash* grants; he used to send the *farmans* direct to *shiqdars*.[2]

The *Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi* was extensively used by all contemporary and later Afghan and Mughal scholars who wrote about Sher Shah; some of them borrowed from it uncritically. By the time 'Abbas Khan wrote, no such hopes as Mushtaqi had entertained, of the re-establishment of Afghan rule, could survive. 'Abbas Khan broods wistfully over the loss of Afghan power, but cannot imagine its restoration. He is conscious that his work would be read by the Mughal nobles, so he tells us that Humayun was defeated at the battle of Bilgram because heavenly personages were fighting on Sher Shah's side: and he does not forget to add that Humayun himself gave the same excuse for his defeat to Mir Saiyid Rafi'u'd Din Safavi at Agra and to Majdu'd Din Sihrindi at Sihrind. He concludes by saying that from the beginning of creation, it was ordained by God that the stage be set for the affluent rule of Akbar; hence God decreed for Humayun a temporary exile from India, and allowed Sher Shah his short hour of triumph.[3] The monologues in the *Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi* need not be taken as an actual reproduction of the views of the speakers; in many cases they seem to reflect the author's own judgment on the currents and cross-currents of contemporary events, and on the policies and programmes of Sher Shah.

'Abbas Khan had planned to divide the *Tuhfa i-Akbar Shahi* into three sections.

1. History of the reign of Sher Shah.
2. History of the reign of Islam Shah.
3. Account of the nobles of Sher Shah,—of his relations: the struggle for the throne after Islam Shah; Islam Shah's successors; and their successive defeats.

Only the first part has survived, but it seems that the two other parts were also written. Ibrahim Batni,[1] who prepared a recension of the work to the end of Islam Shah's reign, apparently had a complete copy at his disposal.

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[1] *TAS*, p. 226. [2] *Ibid*, p. 225-26. [3] *Ibid*, pp. 156-57.

Tazkiratu'l Waqi'at

The *Tazkiratu'l Waqi'at* is the memoirs of Jauhar Aftabchi (ewer-holder); an old servant of Humayun. He commenced it in 995/1586-87, writing merely from memory. It does not appear from the preface that it was written at the command of Akbar; but the impulse to write it came from the Emperor's interest in the history of his father's reign and was intended to provide the compilers of the *Tarikh i-Alfi* with authentic information about Humayun's reign.

In Ramazan 960/August 1553 Jauhar was sent to deprive Mirza Kamran of his eyesight. He told him that he had been serving Humayun for the last nineteen years,[2] so he might have entered Humayun's service in 941/1534-35. He accompanied Humayun in his wanderings in Sind but was left behind at Qandahar. Shortly afterwards he re-joined Humayun at Herat and served him continuously as an ewer-holder until the Emperor had reconquered the Punjab. Afterwards he served in several minor offices in the finance department. At Humayun's death he was serving as one of the treasurers of the Punjab and Multan *sarkars* with his headquarters at Lahore.[3] It seems that Akbar gave him no important office; in fact his experience hardly qualified him for one.

The *Tazkiratu'l Waqi'at* is divided into thirty-four chapters. The first four chapters deal with Humayun's reign down to his flight from Chausa. Chapters five and six give an account of Humayun's defeat in the battle of Bilgram and his flight from Agra and arrival in Sind. Chapters seven to nineteen deal with Humayun's 'wanderings in Sind, his stay in Iran, and the conquest of Qandahar and Kabul. The last six chapters comprise an account of Humayun's departure to India, its conquest, his death and the accession of Akbar to the throne. Thus the major portion of the work covers the period when Jauhar was closely associated with Humayun. He mentions several minor incidents, giving his own interpretation of them. His work, like other Mughal sources, shows that Humayun's brothers and cousins were faithless and his Turani officers petty minded, intriguing and selfish.

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[1] Bodleian Nos, 176-78.

[2] *Tazkiratu'l Waqi'at*-different versions from other manuscripts and recensions are translated in the present authors, *Mughal Kalin Bharat-Humayun* (Aligarh, 1961), I, pp. 579-734.

[3] *MKBH*, I, p. 709.

According to Jauhar, Shah Tahmasp pressed Humayun to accept the Shi'i creed, but a final crisis was averted by the tact of the Shah's prime-minister Qazi Jahan.[1] The interpolations in surviving manuscripts have made it difficult to determine whether Humayun really accepted the Shi'i faith or only feigned acceptance. However, Jauhar makes it clear that Humayun let slip no opportunity[2] of exhibiting his devotion to 'Ali and the other Imams of the Isna 'Asharis, and that the crisis was provoked by the indiscreet orthodox Sunnism of Humayun's Turani officers.[3]

Shortly after the compilation of the *Tazkiratu'l Waqi'at,* some anonymous scholar rewrote it in a lucid style and gave it the punning title *Jawahir Shahi*.[4] Later, Ilahdad Faizi Sihrindi at Jauhar's request recast it in ornate prose, and on 14 Sha'ban 998/24 September 1589 laid it before the Emperor, at Lahore. The Emperor took a keen interest in the work and in its editor.[5] Fortunately, all three versions survive; Jauhar's original version, from which Major Stewart made his English translation,[6] being more frank, is more valuable.

Humayun Nama

Gulbadan Begum wrote the *Humayun Nama* at Akbar's order. Only one incomplete manuscript of the work exists; its first section, which deals with Babur, is very brief, but the second, describing Humayun's reign, is detailed. It ends abruptly at the blinding of Mirza Kamran.

Gulbadan Begum was the daughter of Babur and Dildar Begum.[7] She was born about 1523, four years after her brother Hindal; both children were adopted by Maham, the mother of Humayun who had only one child.[8] In 1528 Babur summoned his family from Kabul; in June 1529 they met him at Agra, but on 26 December 1530 Babur died. Humayun ascended the throne but had no son. Gulbadan Begum says, Maham anxiously prayed for the birth of a grandson and at her suggestion Humayun married several new wives.[1] The early victories of her son filled Maham with joy. On news of each victory she arranged festivities on a grand scale adding variety to them by her inventive genius.[2] On 27 April 1534 she died. This was a severe blow for the ladies.[3] Gulbadan's grief knew no bounds. Humayun comforted them and paid such attention to the wives and daughters of Babur as to ignore his own wives.[4]

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[1] *MKBH*, p. 663-66. [2] *Ibid*, pp. 651, 653. [3] *Ibid*, p. 663.
[4] Ethe, 221. [5] *FS*, f. 169b. [6] Rieu, I, p. 146.
[7] Gulbadan Begum, *Humayun Nama* (London, 1902), p. 9.
[8] *HNG*, p. 30.

Some time before 1538 Humayun married Gulbadan to a distinguished Chaghta'i noble named Khizr Khwaja, and did not take her with him to his campaign against Sher Shah.[5] When Humayun left Agra for the campaign that ended in the battle of Bilgram (fought in May, 1540); Mirza Kamran retreated to Lahore, taking Gulbadan despite her reluctance and protests.[6] Humayun fled before Sher Shah to Lahore, and she was again united with him; but jealousy and selfishness prevented agreement upon any plan. Finally Kamran left for Kabul, taking Gulbadan; and Humayun set off for Sind with Dildar.[7]

After Humayun's conquest of Kabul, at the end of November 1544, Gulbadan was reunited with him; but Mirza Kamran continued to seek her support and that of her husband. In 1547, when Kamran regained Kabul, he unsuccessfully pressed her to persuade her husband to desert Humayun.[8] When Humayun left Kabul to reconquer India, the family was left at Kabul; it was in 1557 that the women joined Akbar.[9] Gulbadan was very intimate with Akbar's mother Hamida Banu Begum; who was four or five years younger. In 1575 she set off on pilgrimage to Mecca; the Emperor himself gave the party a touching send-off.[10] They did not return until[11] March 1582. Gulbadan died in May 1603.[12]

Her memoirs do not match her father's monumental *Tuzuk* in scholarship or absorbing interest but are informal and lucid. Her brief account of Babur unfolds some very interesting aspects of his personality; endowed with a sense of humour, loving, affectionate, and undemanding. She gives a vivid account of the feelings and sentiments of different classes of women in the Mughal harem. She confirms the historian Khwandamir's lengthy account of Humayun's interest in idle inventions and visionary schemes.[1] She loved Humayun, and shared his somewhat squeamish reluctance to face the consequences of her brothers' habitual disloyalty. She had no first-hand information of Humayun's defeat at Chausa and Bilgram; nor did she accompany Humayun in his wanderings through Sind. She gives a detailed account of the circumstances of Humayun's marriage with Hamida Banu Begum and the role of her own mother in surmounting the difficulties in its way.[2]

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[1] *HNG*, p. 27. [2] *Ibid*, p. 28. [3] *Ibid*, p. 30.
[4] *Ibid*, pp. 37-38. [5] *Ibid*, p. 43. [6] *Ibid*, p. 46.
[7] *Ibid*, pp. 48-49. [8] *Ibid*, p. 79.
[9] *AN*, II, pp. 56-57; Bev, II, p. 85.
[10] *AN*, III, p. 145-46. [11] *Ibid*, III, pp. 385-86.
[12] *HNG*, III, p. 817.

The memoirs show that at Shah Tahmasp's court Hamida Banu acted with dignity and tact, and her role in averting various threatened crises was significant.[3] In connection with her account of the protracted struggle for Kabul between Humayun and Kamran, Gulbadan gives interesting glimpses of the life of the ladies at the Mughal court. Her account of the death of her own brother Mirza Hindal, who fell fighting against Mirza Kamran in November 1551, is very touching.[4] In fact her deep affection for Hindal blinded her to his many defects. She considers Hindal's death a climax of Mirza Kamran's treacherous conduct towards his brothers, and ascribes his fall to this tragedy.[5]

In both contents and style, Gulbadan's *Humayun Nama* is unique.

Tazkira i-Humayun wa Akbar

Bayazid Biyat, the author of the *Tazkira* commences his memoir with the remark that Akbar had commanded that all Court servants who had the talent to write history should do so and that anyone who remembered anything of Humayun's reign should write it down. The order was sent by Abu'l Fazl to Bayazid who was then *bakawal begi* (Superintendent of the Imperial Kitchen), an appointment he had received in 1587. Abu'l Fazl appointed a writer for him to dictate to, as a

[1] *HNG*, pp. 31-35.
[2] *Ibid*, 51-53.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 72-73.
[4] *Ibid*, pp. 92-93.
[5] *Ibid*, pp. 95-96.

stroke of paralysis had disabled him from writing.[1] Apparently the work was not available to the authors of the *Tarikh i-Alfi*, but was compiled for the use of Abu'l Fazl.

It is divided into four sections:

1. Account of the years 949/1542 to 953/1546
2. Account of the years 953/1546 to 959/1551
3. Account of the years 959/1551 to 963/1556
4. Account of the years 963/1556 to 999/1590

This arrangement indicates that Bayazid was commissioned to dictate his reminiscences primarily to fill in the lacunae in the history of Humayun left by the memoirs of Jauhar and Gulbadan Begum. The account of Akbar's reign down to 999/1590 deals at some length with incidents in which Bayazid himself was involved. He admits that the entire account was based on his memory, with no help from notes or memoranda; and his memory because of old age and illness was beginning to fail. His paralytic attack of 1587 is responsible for his not writing down the account himself. However, for many events he is the only authority.

Of his birth and origins we know only that he was a Turk, and had spent his early life in Tabriz. He first came in contact with Humayun in 951/1544 at Takht i-Sulaiman in Iran. When Humayun left for Tabriz, Bayazid went off to Mashhad where he plunged himself into studies.[2] When in December, 1544, Humayun reached Mashhad, Bayazid entered Humayun's service.[3] In 1545, Humayun sent him, along with Bairam Khan, to Kabul as an envoy to Mirza Kamran. Bayazid went thence to his brother Shah Biyat, who was governor there. When Humayun's army approached Kabul, Birdi, Bayazid and some of the nobles supporting Mirza Kamran joined the Emperor.[4] After Humayun's entry into Kabul, festivities were arranged on a grand scale. Shah Birdi, seized with an ecstatic fit, gave up service and changed his name to Bahram Saqqa[5] (the water carrier).

Bayazid entered into the service of Husain Quli Sultan Khan Muhardar (the seal keeper) an eminent noble of Humayun. In 1550 Husain Quli fell fighting against Mirza Kamran at Qipc-

[1] Bayazid Biyat, *Tazkira i-Humayun wa Akbar* (Calcutta, 1941), p. 2373.

[2] *BB*, p. 37.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 39.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 54-55.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 56.

haq.[1] Bayazid then served for a time another eminent noble, Khwaja Jalalu'd Din Mahmud; then he became a servant of Mun'im Khan.[2] When Humayun set off to reconquer India, he appointed Mun'im Khan governor of Kabul, and Bayazid remained with him.[3]

In March 1560, when Akbar reached Delhi and resolved to deprive Bairam Khan of supreme control, he summoned several eminent nobles to Delhi, Mun'im Khan was among them. On 9 September 1560, Mun'im Khan, with several other important nobles who had been left in Kabul, reported to the Emperor at Sihrind. He was appointed *wakil* (prime minister) in place of Bairam Khan and given his title of Khan i-Khanan.[4] Bayazid, who accompanied Mun'im Khan was sent as messenger to Bairam Khan. He seems to have convinced Bairam for the time being that the Emperor and the new Khan i-Khanan were kindly disposed towards him. Bayazid served Mun'im Khan in several minor capacities; came to the Emperor's notice.[5] Early in 1563 Akbar appointed Mun'im Khan to restore order in Kabul, disaffected through the intrigues of his stepmother Mah Chuchak, mother of Mirza Hakim. Mun'im Khan, hurrying to Kabul without much preparation, was forestalled by Mah Chuchak at Jalalabad with a strong army, and repulsed; Bayazid was present.[6] The defeated Mun'im hesitated to come to Agra but Akbar encouraged him to return, and restored him to his former position. Hisar Firuza, one of his *jagirs*, was managed by Bayazid, and later in the same year, Bayazid strongly defended it against the attack of the rebel Abu'l Ma'ali, a former noble of Humayun once so favoured as to be called 'son.'[7]

In 1567 the Uzbeg rebellion was crushed; 'Ali Quli Khan, Khan Zaman, killed; and Jaunpur and its dependencies, resumed from the rebels; were assigned to Mun'im Khan, who recalled Bayazid from Hisar Firuza and assigned him Banaras.[8] There Bayazid constructed a school and a mosque on the site of a dilapidated temple with a 'Hindi' (obviously Sanskrit) inscription on one of its pillars shewed to have been built 'by some raja' about

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[1] *BB*, pp. 76, 130.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 150-52.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 187-88.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 232-33, 238.

[5] *Ibid*, pp. 310, 314, 352.

[6] *Ibid*, pp. 210-84.

[7] *MT*, II, p. 9; *AN*, II, p. 16; *BB*, pp. 277-84.

[8] *BB*, p. 310.

700 years before.[1] The Emperor assigned two villages for the maintenance of the teachers of the school. However, the destruction of the temple upset the local Hindus, and when Raja Todar Mal was appointed to review the Khan i-Khanan's army and came to Banaras, the Hindus, instigated by the Khan i-Khanan's *bakhshi* Dost Muhammad; complained against Bayazid. Todar Mal advised them to lay their complaints before him at Jaunpur, where he was to audit Bayazid's accounts;[2] but no discrepancy was found, and no pretext for disciplining him could be made out. Although no action was taken, Bayazid decided not to go to Banaras again. For some time he served directly under the Khan i-Khanan without a *jagir* and went on expeditions sent against Ghazipur and Gorakhpur. He did not go with the Khan i-Khanan in 1574 to fight against Sultan Dawud Kararani of Bengal and received Chunar as his *jagir*.[3] After Mun'im Khan's death in Gaur in 1575, Akbar recalled him to Fathpur, and sent him to fight against Maharana Pratap.[4] Later on he was appointed an officer to make revenue settlements in the *pargana* of Dibalpur in the Sarkar of Ujjain.[5] After completing this task he was ordered to make the revenue settlement of Sarangpur.[6] As a result of his report, Sarangpur was not included in the *khalisa* but was given to Shuja'at Khan in *jagir*. In Muharram 985/March-April 1577 he was appointed *darogha* (superintendent) of the Imperial treasury at Fathpur; but next year, he was allowed to go on pilgrimage to Mecca.[7]

He was detained at Surat because it was alleged that he was taking a huge amount of money. Enquiries revealed that he was taking with him gold and jewelry worth 10,000 rupees. Akbar took no exception to it but ordered him to serve in Gujarat. After some time, convinced that Bayazid earnestly wished to go on pilgrimage; he allowed him to proceed.[8]

Finally in 988/1579, be embarked in the boat named Muhammadi, which had been built by Nauwab Qutbu'd-Din Khan and Nauwab Qilich Khan but a dispute with the Portuguese over taxes delayed his onward journey at Daman.[9] At Aden, he met the ship carrying the party of Gulbadan Begum home from

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[1] *BB*, p. 311.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 312.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 351-52.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 353.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 353.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 353.
[7] *Ibid*, pp. 355-56.
[8] *Ibid*, p. 354.
[9] *Ibid*, p. 355.

Mecca.[1]

Bayazid stayed at Mecca for three years. He repaired the floor of the Ka'bah and lived on intimate terms with the Sherifs. In Mecca, his wife and a son died; he sent the rest of his family to India.[2] He had decided to settle permanently in Mecca, but when he heard that his family was taken captive at Daman he returned to India, and reached Fathpur at the end of 992/1584. Akbar assigned him the *pargana* of Sunam in the Punjab.[3]

Bayazid accompanied Akbar on his Kabul expedition of 1585. His mansab did not exceed 200, but he was given many important offices. In 1586-87 he was appointed *bakawal begi*, but in that very year he was struck down by paralysis. At Lahore, where the Court was to remain for some years, he built himself a house, renovated a mosque, and built a bridge. In front of the Delhi gate at the foot of Lahore he built a new mosque, and a *saqqa khana*[4] (a house for the distribution of water).

Bayazid admits that he had no literary style;[5] but he must have been literate. Since the duties of some of his offices demanded literacy, only his paralysis could have prevented his writing the book himself.

Nine copies were made; two went to the imperial library, one to each of the three princes, one to Gulbadan Begum, and two to the library of Shaikh Abu'l Fazl; one he retained.[6] Further copies were made later, but now only one manuscript survives. Dated Ramazan 1025/September-October 1616, it is in the India Office Library,[7] London.

The work commences with an account of Humayun's departure to Iran, and gives a list of the nobles who accompanied him. In Rajab 1000/April-May 1591, after completing his book, Bayazid obtained a copy of the *farman* addressed by Shah Tahmasp to the governor of Herat, ordering him to receive the fugitive Humayun, and inserted it in his text.[8] A copy of a letter from Humayun to Nauwab Rashid Khan, the ruler of Kashghar, was given to Bayazid by Khwaia 'Abdu's Samad.[9]

Bayazid's account of Humayun's struggle to reconquer Kabul is full of important details, and reveals interesting traits of the

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[1] *BB*, pp. 355-56.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 357.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 357-62.
[4] *Ibid*, pp. 370-71.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 2.
[6] *BB*, p. 11.
[7] Ethe, 223.
[8] *BB*, pp. 277-78.
[9] *Ibid*, pp. 68-70.

Emperor's character; his broad-mindedness in Muslim sectarian disputes, his interest in astronomy and painting, and his patronage of artists and scholars.

Akbar is shown to have been interested from the very beginning of his reign in making new regulations; for example, he had ordered that the imperial servants should not shave their heads.[1] Bayazid describes some of his reckless enterprises but does not neglect details showing him a far-sighted ruler, for instance, Bayazid says that one day the Emperor asked Mun'im Khan what people thought of him as a ruler. The Khan said that people greatly admired his bold action against Adham Khan. Akbar replied:

> No; I have done something better, which it is strange that people don't mention. You know it, but out of consideration for some people, you don't tell me. . . I have expelled the Atkas from the Panjab and have dispersed them all over the country, assigning them *jagirs* at different places."[2] The Atkas or 'foster-relations' were the associates not only of Adham; but also of Akbar's uncles and half-brothers.[3]

Akbar's infinite trust in God's grace and confidence in himself is exhibited in a war council described by Bayazid. Early in 1565, Khan i-Zaman and other Uzbek chiefs rebelled. They controlled the Eastern regions from Avadh to Jaunpur; the Afghan chiefs were still powerful in Bihar and an Afghan dynasty ruled in Bengal. The eminent Mughal nobles feared for their future; but Akbar ordered the Khan i-Khanan to march forthwith, adding: "Remember: it is not servants who have made me king."[4]

Bayazid's description of Mun'im Khan's administration of Kabul, and later on as *wakil*, gives valuable glimpses of political and administrative details. Aspects of the revenue settlements, administration of *jagirs*, and the branding of horses are clearly described.[5] Mun'im Khan's punitive expeditions to Ghazipur and Gorakhpur, and in Bihar, yield interesting information about the activities of the local chiefs and bring out their role in the wars between Mughals and Afghans.[6]

[1] *BB*, p. 245. [2] *Ibid*, p. 253. [3] *Ibid*, pp. 251-52. [4] *Ibid*, p. 239. [5] *Ibid*, pp. 269, 303, 307. [6] *Ibid*, pp. 322-46.

As the work was based mainly upon memory, the sequence of events is not properly maintained and some facts are repeated. Being dictated by a man with no literary pretensions, however, it offers an interesting specimen of Persian as spoken by the new masters of India, and includes many colloquial expressions.

Bayazid was an orthodox Muslim, as his work very clearly reveals. With pleasure he relates that when Himu was brought captive before Akbar, he was offered the honour of Islam or death. "That *haramzada kafir* (unbelieving bastard)" rejected conversion and Akbar himself struck him down with a sword. From that date, Akbar was styled Ghazi.[1] Although Bayazid demolished a temple and after his return to India constructed and repaired mosques in Lahore, his orthodoxy did not lose him the patronage either of Akbar or of Abu'l Fazl. Bayazid's memoir is an important and indispensable source of proofs for broadly based character of Akbar's rule.

Nafa'isu'l-Ma'asir

The *Nafa-'isu'l Ma'asir* is the earliest known work on the history of Akbar. The author Mir 'Ala'u'd. Daula Qazwini was a poet of considerable eminence, whom Akbar's keen interest in poetry stimulated to write. The work is primarily a biographical dictionary of poets divided into 28 chapters entitled *baits* (couplets); each *bait* discusses poets whose *takhallus* (nom de plume) begins with a particular letter. The introduction is entitled *matla'* (initiatory verse of a poem) and is subdivided into two sections called *misra'* (hemistich). The first section deals with the origin and evolution of poetry, the second, the characteristics and forms of poetry; the concluding portion entitled *maqta'* (last verse in a poem) is directed into three *matlabs* (propositions, here meaning sections) each dealing with Babur, Humayun and Akbar respectively.

The work was commenced in 973/1565-66 and the history of Akbar was brought down to 982/1574-75, but additions were made from time to time, 'Ala'u'd Daula had planned to compile a separate work relating to the conquests of Akbar, but it seems never to have been written. Biographies of the nobles of the court of Babur, Humayun and Akbar and the account of the sons of Babur and other Timurid princes are given under *baits* devoted to the account of the poets.

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[1] *BB*, p. 213.

'Ala'u'd Daula Yahya Saifi Husaini belonged to a distinguished family of scholars in Qazwin. His father Mir Yahya was the author of a general history entitled *Lubbu't Tawarikh.*[1] 'Ala'u'd Daula was brought up by his elder brother Mir *'Abdu'l Latif* whom he used to address as Hazrat Aqa (the respected Lord). It was alleged that they were the leaders of the Sunni community of Qazwin. Shah Tahmasp, in Sha'ban 960/July-August 1553, ordered that Mir Yahya and Mir 'Abdu'l Latif should be arrested and the books on Sunnism in their library brought to the Court. Mir 'Abdu'l Latif and his talented son Mir Ghyasu'd Din 'Ali (Naqib Khan) escaped from Iran and reached India early in the first year of Akbar's reign. Mir Yahya was imprisoned in Isfahan and died there on 23 Rajab 962/13 June 1555. For some time Mir'Ala'u'd Daula lived in Iran, and wrote to please the Shi'is a *qasida* (ode) cursing both his father and elder brother; but before long he too had to leave Iran, and seems to have reached Akbar's Court in the early years of his reign.[2] There he carved out a respectable place for himself among the intellectual elite. For some time he served under Mirza 'Aziz Koka.[3]

His account of Babur and Humayun in the *Nafa isu'l Ma'asir* are based on the *Tuzuk i-Baburi* and *Tarikh i-Rashidi* respectively. At Qazwin, then the capital of Iran, Humayun had paid a special visit to Mir Yahya who impressed him greatly with his knowledge of history.[4] The biographical account of the vizier Qazi Jahan gave a vivid account of the contribution made by the Qazi in reconciling Shah Tahmasp with Humayun.[5]

Mir 'Abdu'l Latif seems to have provided his brother with information relating to the early years of Akbar's reign. He quotes chronograms, which fix the sequence of events more precisely.

The work seeks to present Akbar as the defender of the *shari'a* and the patron of the 'ulama. His conquests are described to his zeal in promoting Islam. Raja Bhara Mal is given the title of *Muti'u'l-Islam*[1] (obedient to Islam). The motives for the conquest of Gujarat are given as the annihilation of the Mahdawi[2] Afghans, and political factors are ignored.

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[1] *Lubbu't Tawarikh* by Mir Yahya 'Abdu'l Latif al-Husaini al-Saifi al-Qazwini (1481-1555) is a sketch of general history to 1542, Storey, p. 111.

[2] *MT*, III, pp. 97-98; Haig, pp. 148-49.

[3] *MT*, III, pp. 273-74; *Nafa' isu'l Ma'asir* (Aligarh University) f.

[4] *NM*, f. 183b. [5] *Ibid*, f. 184a-b.

The work gives first hand information upon the construction of different buildings at Agra and Fathpur-Sikri; of court musicians; and of verses composed by Akbar.[3] The biographies of nobles and poets reveal some important aspects of their personality and offer valuable glimpses of the contemporary intellectual and religious climate.

Some of the verses he selects are of questionable quality; Badauni, who based the account of the poets of Akbar's reign in his *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh* on this work, criticises 'Ala'u'd Daula's selections mercilessly and finds his judgment and discretion poor.[4]

Tarikh i-Akbari or *Tarikh i-Arif Qandahari*

Largely based on the *Nafa'isu'l Ma'asir*, but more extensive and valuable, is the *Tarikh i-Akbari* or the *Tarikh i-Arif Qandahari*. Like its model, it was divided into *matla'* and *maqta'*, only the *maqta,'* the concluding portion relating to the history of Akbar, is now extant, while the *matla's* embodying the history of Babur and Humayun seem to have been lost. The author 'Arif Qandahari, had originally contemplated a dedication to his patron Muzaffar Khan Turbati with the title *Muzaffar Nama* but after Muzaffar's death in Rabi' I 998/April-May 1580, he changed his mind[5] and entitled the work *Tarikh i-Akbari*.

'Arif entered the service of Bairam Khan after Humayun's conquest of Qandahar in 1545 and was appointed Mir Saman (officer in charge of household stores). He continued to serve his master even after his fall and was present at Patan when on 31 January 1561, Bairam Khan was assassinated.[6] Shortly afterwards he visited Mecca and Medina. Some time before 1574 he had returned to India, and was in the service of Muzaffar Khan, a former *diwan i-buyutat* (manager of estates) of Bairam Khan. In November-December 1577 'Arif came from Bihar to join the

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[1] *NM*, f. 189b. [2] *Ibid*, f. 201b.

[3] *Ibid*, f. 229a-233a.

[4] *MT*, III, p. 316, 323, 338, 347; Haig, p. 437, 446, 467, 477.

[5] *Arif*, p. 251.

[6] *Ibid*, p. 64; *Ma'asir i-Rahimi*, I, p. 62; II, p. 1,7.

Imperial camp at Delhi. Two months later, he was appointed to the *diwan i-sa'adat* under Makhdumu'l Mulk 'Abdu'llah Sultanpuri and was posted to the Punjab. It seems that he was unable to work under the Mulla; he resigned, and retired from active service.[1] The *Tarikh i-Akbari*, which he had commenced earlier, was completed about August 1581 and was apparently available to the compilers of the *Tarikh i-Alfi*.

Besides the *Nafa'isu'l Ma'asir*, 'Arif seems to have drawn upon copies of letters, orders and other papers in the hands of Muzaffar Khan, Makhdumu'l Mulk and other important dignitaries. These sources, combined with the author's personal knowledge of the events of the later years of Humayun and the reign of Akbar, make the work exceedingly valuable.

It is divided into two parts. The first part is sub-divided into an introduction and is entitled *fiqra i-awwal* (first phrase) and thirty-two large paragraphs entitled *fiqra i-akhiri* (last phrase). Each *fiqra i-akhiri* deals with some particular achievement of Akbar. 'Arif regards this arrangement as an original contribution,[2] and this part seeks to present a comprehensive image of Akbar's reforms, and the literary and cultural activities of his reign.

Like all contemporary authors, 'Arif also eulogises the political unity that the country achieved because of Akbar's conquests. He rightly regards Akbar's policy towards *zamindars* as the Emperor's most outstanding achievement. He says:

> "The cherishing of most of the rajas of Hind, who possessed strong forts, is evidence of his perfect wisdom. There are about two or three hundred *zamindar* rajas. If one were to annihilate them, it would be exceedingly difficult for they held impregnable forts. If one were to devote six months to a year to the conquest of each one of these, at least two or three hundred years would have been required. It was because of this fact that the Indian rulers had failed to conquer the whole of India. The Emperor has been able to control them tactfully and they too have girt their loins in loyalty and are steadfast in his service. This has fostered peace on the roads and has exterminated highway robbery. The *hadis* tells us that *kafirs* should first be invited to submit; if they fail to do so, war should be waged against them."[3]

[1] *'Arif*, p. 234. [2] *Ibid*, p. 34. [3] *Ibid*, pp. 47-48.

This interpretation of *hadis* seems to have emerged out of new political needs. The *fiqras* highlight the universal benefits of peace and strong administration. On the highway from Agra to Ajmer, 140 *kuroh* (about 280 miles) long, hostels and rest houses were constructed at each second *kuroh*. At each *kuroh* a tower was built, adorned with the horns of deer killed by the Emperor; each tower had 304 such horns. Four thousand men were employed to carry news rapidly from one corner of the country to the other. At every fifth *kuroh*, two swift horses were kept in readiness to carry sealed letters of the Emperor and the principal nobles. The safety of the roads contributed to the development of trade and commerce. Akbar's early remission of taxes on merchants and their goods became more useful when the roads became safer, and trade more flourishing. The work highlights Akbar's belief that his subjects should reside in a state of affluence because they were 'the objects of the bounty of the Bestower of gifts (God).[1]

The Emperor's interest in elephants, tigers, falcons, and in polo, hunting, riding and other manly sports, is discussed under separate *fiqras*. The famous discussions in the *'Ibadat Khana* are attributed to the Emperor's interest in the encouragement of learning.[2] One of the *fiqras* gives a detailed description of Akbar's arrangements to have the legends of Amir Hamza lavishly illustrated, and presents Akbar as a great patron of art.[3]

The arrangement of the second part, which covers mainly historical narratives, is also unusual. Each chapter is preceded and followed by *dua'a* (prayers) for the Emperor. The portions dealing with Bairam Khan's regency evaluate his personality sympathetically and emphasise the wickedness of the conspiracies of Pir Muhammad Khan and his supporters which ended with the fall of Bairam—the author's old patron.[4] The account of the Emperor's conquests in Gujarat and Bihar, his pilgrimage to Ajmer and Patan, and the ecstatic fit he experienced[5] in early Rabi' I 986/May 1578 is very vivid. In his description of Akbar's *karori* experiment, 'Arif suggests that it was intended to promote agriculture, to check the fraudulent practices of *aimadars* and to demarcate precisely the holding of *aimadars* and cultivators.[1] The work presents a clear picture of the tensions provoked by the introduction of the *dagh*, the resumption of *jagirs* and promulgation of rates of payment in cash for the *mansabdars*.[2]

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[1] *Arif*, pp. 35-39, 46.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 40-41.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 45-46.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 54-56, 60, 66.

[5] *Ibid*, pp. 235-36.

He seems to have written an account of the rebellions of 1580 and Akbar's expedition to Kabul, but the text survives in fragments only. This loss has deprived us of an assessment by a man personally acquainted with the politics of the region.

'Arif repeatedly calls Akbar a promoter of the *shari'a* and offers prayers for the *Badshah i-Islam* (the king of Islam). He notes approvingly Akbar's adoption of the title of Amiru' l-Muminin[3] (the Commander of the Faithful) in 1578-79. He eulogises the efforts of *kotwals* to suppress gambling, drinking and debauchery.

The author's attempt to copy the ornate and artificial literary style of Hasan Nizami, the author of *Taju'l Ma'asir* has made his presentation confused and style enigmatic. The frequent insertion of the *Quranic* verses is incompatible with the nature and spirit of the narrative; the verses themselves can hardly be reconciled with the context whose effect they are intended to enliven.

Tarikh i-Alfi

Akbar ordered the *Tarikh i-Alfi* compiled to evaluate the history of one thousand years of Islam. Akbar took two important steps to demonstrate that the completion of the Islamic millennium (1000/1591-92) was only a historical phenomenon with no religious or spiritual significance; contrary to popular Islamic belief, nothing supernatural or mystical was to accompany the completion of one thousandth year of Islam. Firstly, in 990/1581-82 he issued coins with the date one thousand stamped on them expressed by the Arabic word *alf* (a thousand), secondly, he appointed a board of scholars to compile the *Tarikh i-Alfi*. Badauni says:

> "In this year (990/1581-82) His Majesty ordered that as 1000 years of the *hijra* era, which is in general use, are now on the point of completion, a history be written of all the kings of Islam down to that date and entitled *Tarikh i-Alfi*. In reality it

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[1] '*Arif*, p. 197.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 205-12.

[3] The event is dated 986/1578-79. 'Arif, p. 244.

> was intended to supersede all other histories. He further ordered that (in the work) the year of the *rihlat* (death of Muhammad) should be substituted for *hijra* dates. He commissioned seven persons to compile the history."[1]

Badauni implies that the order was intended to supersede the Islamic *shari'a* and to supplant it with Akbar's own institutions and regulation. However, Asaf Khan Ja'far Beg, the principal author of the second half of the *Tarikh i-Alfi*, explains in his introduction that the motives of Akbar in having the *Tarikh i-Alfi* compiled were broadly based:

> "In the Amnabad (town of tranquillity) of his (Akbar's) justice men lead a peaceful life. One may say that even animals have no trouble. The gates of the mansion of his justice are open to the followers of different religions. At his command, wolves perform the task of the shepherds. Because of the blessings of his justice, *kafirs* are shouldering the burdens of Islam. He yearns for wisdom and seeks it more and more. He loves reality, and hates idle talk, he pays attention to what is said, and not to who says it. Constantly he strives that nobles and commoners alike should benefit from his perfect knowledge. His heart is inclined to justice, desiring that the followers of different faiths, each having become acquainted with the truth and reality of the others' religion, should act with restraint and abandon bigotry. He has accordingly ordered, that the rational contents of different religions and faiths should be translated in the language of each, and that the rose garden of the traditional aspects of each religion should, as far as possible, be cleared of the thorns of bigotry; for in each faith they have introduced hundreds of (unauthorised) innovations and to each religion they have added thousands of (new) regulations. While giving his sermons his divinely inspired tongue never fails to urge that everyone describe his (religious) principles in accordance with what it suits him and assert such logical arguments in support as he may choose himself. Traditions have become so unreliable that even though *azan* was called out daily during the Prophet's life, and reached the ears of people near and far, Sunnis and Shi'is now differ sharply on the mode of calling it

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 301, 318; Lowe, pp. 310; 328.

> and each considers the other wrong. Interested and perverse parties find the road open to make interpolations among the facts of history; so it is essential that efforts should be made to enable reason to make its impact upon the transmission of traditions. Accordingly, the late Hakim Ahmad was ordered to compile an authentic history based on reliable sources. He was ordered to begin it from the death of Prophet Muhammad, to verify traditions relating to all parts of world, and bring down the account to the present time. In obedience to the royal mandate, he wrote within three years a detailed history."[1]

This contradicts the motives which Badauni imputed to the scheme. The work was planned in the annalistic form for general histories adopted by the Arab historians. The preference for this form of historiography over the dynastic histories, in which historians writing in Persian specialised, shows that Akbar did not despise Arabic or Arabic studies as such. It is significant that the history of the Prophet Muhammad was not made the subject of inquiry, obviously because controversies over the Prophet might have injured popular sentiments.

Originally a board of seven scholars was constituted to compile the work and the account of each year was assigned to one particular author.

1st year: Naqib Khan[2]
2nd year: Shah Fathu'llah Shirazi
3rd year: Hakim Human
4th year: Hakim-'Ali[3]
5th year: Hajji Ihrahim Sihrindi
6th year: Nizamu'd Din Ahmad Bakhshi
7th year: Mulla 'Abdu'l-Qadir Badauni[4]

The history of the thirty-five years was assigned in the above order. The panel included the best talents of Akbar's reign and embodied scholars of all shades of opinion. Akbar had ordered a very high degree of objectivity and perfection, and, as far as his leisure permitted, he supervised the compilation. He was not literate, but long familiarity with the histories he had read out to him had developed his critical faculty enough for him to discriminate between legend and sober history. Badauni himself says that his own account of the seventh year provoked a crisis. He had written about the foundation of Kufah, the erection of the palace of the *khalifah*, and its destruction; the marriage of Umm i-Kulsum, daughter of 'Ali; the institution of the time for prayers, the victory at Nasibin and the scorpions as big as cocks. Akbar raised serious doubts; Badauni does not point out what portions the Emperor found most objectionable, but certainly the scorpion story would have appeared irrational and legendary. Asaf Khan did not support Badauni but Abu'l Fazl and Ghazi Khan Badakhshi said that the account was correctly extracted from the sources. Akbar asked Badauni to explain the reason for repeating extravagances. Upon his saying that he had invented nothing, *Rauzatu'l-Ahbab* and other biographical works were obtained from the Imperial library and to Badauni's great relief, his account was proved correct. The problem of dealing with such irrational and legendary material in a sober history remained, however, unsolved.[1]

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[1] *Tarikh i-Alfi.*

[2] Naqib Khan, son of Mir 'Abdu' l Latif Qazwini, mentioned on previous pages, is said to have learnt the seven volumes of Mir Khwand's *Rauzatu's Safa* by heart. This is most likely a romantic falsehood; but there is good evidence that he had a remarkable memory.

[3] He was a physician, historian and engineer combined in one. According to Jahangir, he composed a commentary upon the *Qamun* of Avicenna.

[4] *MT*, II, p. 318. [5] *Infra.*

The board of compilers brought the work down to the 36th year, but they seem to have worked too slowly for the Emperor's taste. He, therefore, ordered Mulla Ahmad of Thatta[2] to write independently. He brought the account down to 693 H(683 Rihlat)/1294, and after his murder in 1588, Asaf Khan Ja'far Beg was ordered to complete it. Starting from the reign of Ghazan Khan in Iran (1295-1304), he reached 997/1588-89.

In 1000/1591-92 Badauni was ordered to revise it and remove discrepancies in dates. He worked for a year, and revised the first two volumes written by Mulla Ahmad. Mulla Mustafa Katib, an *ahadi*,[3] collaborated with him. It was believed that the portions

[1] *MT*, II, pp. 318-19; Lowe, pp. 227-28.

[2] For his biography see Nuru'llah Shustari *Mazalisu'l Muminin*. Although Abu'l Fazl respected his scholarship, he did not like his shi'i bigotry (*AN*, III, pp. 527-28); Faizi's marsiya (*Kulliyat*, pp. 141-42)

[3] Ahadis served under the Emperor's immediate order. Most clerks of the Imperial army, the court painters and other artists, the foremen in Akbar's workshops were reckoned *ahadis* and thus were not obliged to furnish any contingent. (Blochmann, p. 20).

written by Mulla Ahmad were coloured with his Shi‘i prejudices. Badauni revised the first volume thoroughly, but he did not interfere with the second volume, confining himself only to the collation of work with the sources, and the correction of the chronology.[1] The third volume, written by Asaf Khan, was not revised, and his name is mentioned at different places in the work as its author.

The existing manuscripts do not correspond with the three volume arrangement of the original compilation; copyists, binders and owners of manuscripts have divided the volumes in accordance with their convenience. Abu'l Fazl says that he wrote a preface, but no surviving manuscript contains it. The work starts with the following sentence:

The Beginning of the Book.

An account of the incidents occuring in the first year after the death of the last of the Prophets.

It is said that when the last of the Prophets died, the members of his family began to weep. When the people in the mosque heard it, they were seized with anxiety and anguish...[2]

Asaf Khan says that Akbar had ordered that the style should be free from the burdens both of prolixity and artificiality, and of extracts from the Arabic. The account of a new dynasty should be preceded by a brief description of the founder of the dynasty and circumstances of his rise to power.[3] This was intended to fill in lacunae, but it could not remove defects common to the annalistic productions. The account of each year stands as an independent unit, and the continuity of narration is invariably broken.

The authors had drawn upon a vast collection of source material in Arabic and Persian. Sometimes the principal sources are named. Attempts were made to examine all aspects of controversial questions. The authors, for example, lamented that their account of the religious beliefs of the Isma‘ilis and the career of Hasan i-Sabbah (died after 1124) was based on the works of Sunnis alone for no works written by Isma‘ilis or the followers of Hasan i-Sabbah were available to them. They believed that enemies of different creeds tended to falsify the truth and misrepresented their opponents' viewpoint. Thus standard Sunni works contained versions of the belief and history of the Isna 'Asharis which were not traceable in the Shi'i works, and no correct estimate of the Isna 'Asharis was possible on the basis of Sunni works alone. With this in mind, both sides of the Sunni-Shi'i controversy over the election of the first Caliph Abu Bakr were presented, and the authors took no side themselves.[1]

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 392; Lowe, pp. 406-07.

[2] *TA*, (Ethe, 112) f.

[3] *Ibid*, f. 171a.

The annalistic treatment did not prevent the authors from including notices of eminent poets, philosophers, 'ulama and sufis under the year of their deaths. They appended a list of their main contributions of the deceased to knowledge with brief comments on the more important ones.

The biography of Avicenna unfolds his personality objectively and denounces Mahmud of Ghazni's enmity towards him.[2] The *Ihya al-Ulum* of Ghazali has been reviewed at some length and the views regarding the imperfection of Ghazali's knowledge of *hadis* have been quoted. It is claimed that Ghazali himself admitted that his knowledge of *hadis* was poor.[3] The biography of 'Umar Khayam (*c* 1021-1122) notes his contributions to science, and quotes one of his *ruba'is*[4] to prove that he believed in the transmigration of the soul. Nor does the work omit a biographical notice of the Shi'i scholar al-Hilli (1250-1325), of adventurers who claimed to be the Mahdi, and of personalities who led various religious and sectarian movements.

The authors were deeply conscious of the religious tensions of their own times, and sought to impress upon their readers the adverse consequences of narrow mindedness. The revival of Sunni orthodoxy under the Saljuqs in Iran and Iraq, and their persecution of Shi'is, provided the authors with an opportunity of denouncing both the Shi'is and the Sunnis, they lament that the narrow-mindedness of the followers of both sects has foiled all efforts for peace and reconciliation.[5]

The *Tarikh i-Alfi's* presentation of the first four Caliphs and the Umaiyad and 'Abbasid dynasties emphasises the glory of

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[1] *TA*, f. 295a.

[2] *Ibid*, f. 193a. The authors criticise Mahmud of Ghazni for considering the philosophers as heretics and call the Sultan a bigoted Sunni.

[3] *Ibid*, ff. 312a, 380a.

[4] *Ibid*, f. 381a.

[5] *Ibid*, ff. 227a, 231b-233a.

Islam's expansion as a political power, rather than a religious phenomenon. Although no injustice has been done to the history of other countries, the Ghaznavids, the Delhi Sultans and Chingiz Khan and his successors are highlighted. The work seeks to prove that the origin of the word Somnath as believed by the Muslims is incorrect.[1] It alleges that when the Khokkars embraced Islam in Muhammad bin Sam's time, at the instance of a Muslim whom they had taken captive, they were polyandrous.[2]

The victories of Chingiz have been ascribed to Divine assistance, his barbarous cruelties glossed over, and the humanitarian aspects of his Institutes emphasised. The account concludes:

> "This description is intended to make the wise ponder, and realise that the spirit of mutual co-operation and assistance among the Mongols facilitated their conquests and led to the annihilation of powerful enemies thereby enabling them to rule for a long time."[3]

The immediate cause of the fall of al-Mu'tasim bi'llah, the last 'Abbasid Caliph (1242-58) is ascribed to the faithlessness of Ibn 'Alqami (died June 1258) the Shi'i *wazir* of the Caliph. The Sunni 'ulama, the work says, had made the *wazir* their enemy by insulting him and persecuting the Shi'is of Baghdad.[4]

The work gives interesting glimpses of the capacity of the 'ulama to adjust themselves to the rule of the Mongols. Mulla Hamidu'd Din, for instance, a Shafi'i *'alim* had convinced Qubilay Khan (1259-94) that a *mushrik* (polytheist) was one who did not write the name of God the Most High at the top of his *farmans*, and that the Qur'an did not permit the persecution of believers in the unity of God.[5]

The history of the Delhi Sultans is based mainly on the *Tabaqat i-Nasiri* of Minhaju's Siraj, the *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi* of Barani, and the *Tarikh i-Bahadur Shahi*. *Majmuah i-Hafiz Abru* of Hafiz Abru (died 1430) has been discredited. The account of Sultan 'Ala'u'd Din's reign is largely based upon the *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, but draws upon some other sources, including the Rajput legend of Padmini, which finds a place in the account of 1303-04. First we read of the Sultan's conquest of Chitor; then the abortive expedition to Warangal. The remarkable success of Sultan 'Ala'u'd Din in eliciting obedience to his statutes and regulations is vividly described, and then we are told of the escape of the heavily guarded Rai of Chitor.

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[1] *TA*, f. 164a.

[2] *Ibid*, f. 189a.

[3] *Ibid*, f. 241a.

[4] *Ibid*, ff. 313b-315a.

[5] *Ibid*, f. 92a.

> "When the Rai was taken captive it was reported to the Sultan that in his palace, there was a woman endowed with all those qualities of beauty which in Indian terminology are summed up by name of Padmini. A message was sent to the Rai that his release from prison depended upon presenting the Sultan with that paragon of beauty. The Rai ordered his family, which had taken shelter in the fastnesses of the mountains to send the woman to Court. After some consultation, the Rajput chiefs and soldiers who were with the family of the Rai devised a stratagem. They filled a large number of palanquins with brave men. Approaching the prison of the Rai they said that they had brought Padmini and the family of the Rai, who wanted to visit the Rai and bid him farewell. When the palanquins were brought in, the Rajputs emerged with swords drawn and began to kill the guards. They released the Rai, mounted him on horse-back and fled. The Sultan's soldiers pursued them; some Rajputs were killed, but the Rai escaped safely. Sultan 'Ala'u'd Din gave Chitor to a favourite servant who was son of the Rai's sister. He acquired great power there and Rajputs submitted to his rule."[1]

No surviving histories of the Delhi Sultans gives the story, but the Rajputs believed the legend to be true. Sultan 'Ala'u'd Din had earlier married Kamla Devi, the wife of Rai Karan of Gujarat; his son had married Kamla Devi's daughter Deval Devi. There is nothing unlikely or improbable in 'Ala'u'd Din's coveting the hand of a queen of Chitor. The Rai's nephew enthroned in Chitor might have whetted the sexual appetite of the Sultan in his own interest. But the legend does not explain why the Rajputs submitted to 'Ala'u'd Din's nominee and not to the Rai himself when he had so heroically escaped. Padmini is not a proper name, but a generic term commonly used in Sanskrit literature to describe a woman of certain physical characteristics. The story of the palanquins and the escape of the Rai is from the common stock of legend current from ancient times, and neatly fitted several Rajput legends as well as Malik Muhammad Ja'isi's *Padmavat*. The legend finds mention in the *A'in i-Akbari* too. Later historians, such as Firishta, took it from the *Padmavat*[1] and added more colour to it. The inclusion of legend in the *Tarikh i-Alfi* intended to maintain a high standard of sobriety was motivated by political reasons. It satisfied the Rajput love of legend and romance, and at the same time glorified Akbar's conquest of Chitor.[2]

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[1] *TA*, f. 129b.

The account of Muhammad bin Tughluq is given under the year of his death. The book quoted as *Tarikh i-Misr* is either Ibn Battuta's travels or the *Masalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar*.[3] The Sultan is presented as an ambitious conqueror, enamoured of the company of the philosophers, hostile to the traditional religious learning and ruthless in inflicting severe punishment.[4]

The invasion of Timur has been summarised from the *Zafar Nama* of Sharafu'd-Din 'Ali Yazdi. The history of the Sultans of Gujarat and Malwa has been taken from the *Tarikh i-Bahadur Shahi*.

The work seeks to contradict the belief that Sultan Husain Mirza of Herat (1489-1506) was inclined to Shi'ism. The account of Babur is based on the *Waqi'at i-Baburi* or the *Tuzuk*[5] and even the copy then used had a gap between 927/1521 and 932/1525. The description of Humayun's reign is fairly detailed and Sher Shah's career, given under the date of his death is not much biased.

It is suggested that the achievements of Akbar are far superior to the conquests of the famous Saladin, (Salahu'd Din Aiyubi 1169-93). The author hopes that the seven climes would soon be conquered and one of his devoted servants appointed Sultan in each.[6] The *Tarikh i-Alfi* indicates the sort of his image which Akbar wished to be handed down to posterity. Combining in himself worldly power with spiritual eminence and preoccupied with affairs of state but not ignoring his ascetic exercises, he is presented as a man elect of God.

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[1] The earliest available version in poetry was made by Mulla 'Abdu'sh Shakur Bazmi in 1619 and dedicated to Jahangir (Ethe, 1582). The original was very popular with both Hindus and Muslims.

[2] *TA*, ff. 633a-34a.

[3] *Ibid*, f. 224a.

[4] *Ibid*, f. 239b.

[5] *Ibid*, f. 419b.

[6] *Ibid*, f. 122a.

Asaf Khan hoped to write a separate work on the miracles and moral qualities of the Emperor; a fact which shows that a calendar of Akbar's miracles, such as Abu'l Fazl presents in the *Akbar Nama*, had already been prepared. For example, the *Tarikh i-Alfi* gives a fantastic account of how Akbar refused to kill Hemu. When in his childhood, he was learning painting, he painted a man with mutilated limbs. Asked the man's name, he replied: Hemu, why should he kill him again, when brought before him in the flesh?[1]

Like all previous histories, this work too seeks to present Akbar as Badshah i-Islam. Akbar was once the interested spectator of a battle between the yogis and Sannyasis;[2] but the work alleges that he went further than that and summoned the leaders, and with rational argument sought to persuade them that their beliefs were false. Finding them obdurate, he allowed them to fight because he thought that Islam would gain, no matter whose side lost.[3] A similar reply was given by Asaf Khan to Badauni who asked in the battle of Haldighati how he could distinguish the friendly Rajputs from the enemy.[4]

Writing about the wealth of India, the author says that immigrants in a short time rise to the status of nobles. It compares Akbar's policy with that of the Sultans of Turkey: in Turkey only those whose ancestors have lived there for generations are trusted and promoted. Strangers pass their days in poverty and no one cares for talent and ability.[5] Without entirely overlooking Turkey, Iran and other Muslim states, the work finds their rulers no match to Akbar in conquest and administration.

The Akbar Nama

Asaf Khan had planned to write a detailed history of Akbar's reign and a separate work on the administrative institutions and revenue statistics of the empire. Abu'l Fazl was more interested in writing a history of religious movements to demonstrate the importance of Akbar as a religious guide. In 1589 or 1590, however, he was ordered by the Emperor to write a history of his own reign.[1] The theme appealed to Abu'l Fazl immensely as it gave better scope for his talents and an excellent opportunity to repay the debts of gratitude he owed to Akbar. The commission frustrated Asaf Khan's ambitions; whether they were shared by Mulla 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni or Nizamu'd Din Ahmad, we do not know.

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[1] *TA*, f. 593b.

[2] *AN*, III, pp. 286-87.

[3] *TA*, ff.268a, b.

[4] *MT*, II, pp. 231-32.

[5] *TA*, f. 611b, 612a.

Abu'l Fazl had carefully read all the important Arabic and Persian histories, and many had been discussed in Akbar's court, which had sharpened his critical faculty and refined his taste. He considered existing historical works to contain distortions. of fact. He knew that through the great histories of the Buwaihids, the Samanids and the Ghaznavids, the memory of their achievements remained green. For him, historical analysis was not a mere intellectual exercise, but an instrument of unfolding the advantages of Akbar's policy of peace with all, and so his *Akbar Nama* is as tendentious as the other works which he condemns. However, Abu'l Fazl's merit can be judged under three separate headings:

1. Collection and compilation of data.
2. New literary style and plan.
3. Interpretation of historical facts.

1. The well organized Imperial record-office established in 1574-75[2] was at his disposal, including the considerable material already collected for the *Tarikh i-Alfi*. He procured copies of orders earlier issued to the provincial governors and other eminent officers. Dignitaries of state and other well informed persons were called upon to write down their own reminiscences and despatch them to the Court. Facilities were provided to well inrformed persons too willing to write or dictate their own narratives of events. Abu'l Fazl himself made persistent enquiries from old servants and attendants of the Court and discssed events with the officers involved.

Much that had happened after his coming to Court was well known to him. He was personally responsible for helping Akbar to arrive at decisions upon several questions of policy, and knew the reasons which had swayed the final judgment. He claims to have collected dozens of authorities for controversial issues and tabulated them to resolve contradictions. Generally the unanimous versions of cautious reporters were accepted as correct. Where divergent authorities appeared of equal rank, he submitted them to Akbar for his final judgment.[1] Although the methodology was not free from defects, it absolved him of responsibility for any inaccuracies and wrong judgments.

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[1] *A'in*, III, pp. 196-97; Jarrett, III, pp. 468-69; *A'in*, I, p. 136; Blochmannt pp. 268-69; Beveridge, I, p. 1, n. 1. Beveridge thinks that the establishmens of the record office was partly due to Abu'l Fazl's suggestion, but this seem, to be hardly possible.

Altogether, Abu'l Fazl made five drafts of the *Akbar Nama*. By 1001/1592-93, when Nizamu'd Din Ahmad completed his *Tabaqat i-Akbari*, they were available to him and to other scholars, and had attained some celebrity.[2] The chronological sequence of the first draft was not properly adjusted; Abu'l Fazl, therefore, rearranged his material and prepared an entirely new draft. The solar Ilahi era, formally introduced in 992/1584, was used for all dates of Akbar's reign. Although Abu'l Fazl does not name his friend Mir Fathu'llah Shirazi, he most probably obtained his help in the conversion of dates. The fourth and fifth drafts were dovoted to the improvement of language and style.[3]

2. The selection of a suitable literary style engaged Abu'l Fazl's most minute attention. Commenting upon the prevalent styles, he says:

> "They consider cadences and decorative style as the constituents of eloquence, and think that prose should be tricked out like the works of poets. They make the collection of words, the art of derivations, the rules of paronomasia, and homonyms their central point. They expend their talents on quotations (*iqtibas*), the use of synonyms (*istihilal*), allusions, the invention of enigmas and the reciting of panegyrics and genealogies. They think that fantastic embellishments are language's capital and do not look to the weighty matters of eloquence, and the glories of the spirit. A few abandon the old methods when they career (*sic*) in the spiritual arena. These regard minutiae and fantastic notions as the game to be pursued in that region, and consider an involved style, and far-fetched metaphors, which bear upon themselves the marks of the dis-

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 199; Jarrett, III, pp. 472-74; *AN*, p. 10; Bev, I, p. 32.

[2] *Tabaqat*, I, p. 1.

[3] *Ain*, III, pp. 199-200; Jarrett, III, pp. 474-75.

> approval of good judges, as the ornaments of discourse, and do not discriminate between novel obscurities, out of which they fashion the philosopher's stone of wisdom, and the initial difficulties of cognition. The general crowd of writers set down nothing but what is true and commonplace, and open the lips of reproach against both the above kinds of obscure diction.[1]

Abu'l Fazl claims to have invented a style different from any other, repudiating the suggestions of well wishers who advised him to stick to the traditional style of the eminent historians and avoid the trouble of carving out a new road for himself. It is his new style which was the despair of his contemporaries and later scholars.

It seeks to replace the Arabism and grotesqueries of language of the historians of the Mongols of Iran with the language of neo-platonic, peripatetic and *ihsraqi* thinkers. He brings his extraordinary genius and power of expression to bear upon the unfamiliar language of philosophers and harmonises it with historical needs. Elliot[2] and Elphinstone[3] ignore the novelty of Abu'l Fazl's style and pass harsh judgments against it, but Beveridge, who translated and annotated the *Akbar Nama* says:

> "Abu'l Fazl's general accuracy has been vindicated against Elphinstone, who has made a charge against him which is based on Elphinstone's own imperfect knowledge of Persian."[4]

The *Akbar Nama*, down to the tenth year of Akbar's reign —about half of the first volume—was revised by Faizi and the imprint of great poet's genius on his brother's prose is marked. It seems that Abu'l Fazl rendered into prose many of Faizi's poems on Akbar and his early conquests; Faizi's death on 15 October, 1595 deprived Abu'l Fazl of a sympathetic helper and adviser.[5] The rest of the work, written and revised by him alone, contains a high proportion of old Iranian words and phrases which symbolize the new intellectual climate of Akbar's reign.

Spurred by the attention created by Abu'l Fazl's style, some of his admirers challenged Mulla 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni to write something in Abu'l Fazl's style. The Mulla wrote a short account of Nagar Chain in Abu'l Fazl's style and incorporated it in his *Muntakhabu't-Tawarikh.*[1] It bears no comparison with the *Akbar Nama*, and is an utter failure.

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[1] Bev, II, pp. 553-54 and notes; *AN*, II, p. 381.

[2] H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India*, II, p. 381.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 6-7 (Elphinstone is quoted).

[4] Bev, III, p. XII.

[5] *A'in*, III, p. 199; Jarrett, III, p. 474.

Abu'l Fazl had planned to write a separate volume for each thirty years of Akbar's life, and the history of his ancestors was given as an introduction to the first volume. He believed that Akbar was going to live for 120 years, and if he himself survived he would be able to write four volumes on the history of his hero; the last volume was intended to embody Akbar's institutions, and statistics of his reign. In the 42nd year (1597-98) he was able to present the fruits of seven years' hard labour in the form of three volumes; the last, known as the *A'in i-Akbari*, is the third volume of the *Akbar Nama.*[2] Although regarded as an independent volume; the *A'in i-Akbari* is the concluding part of the *Akbar Nama* and each supplements and compliments the other. In the examination of Abu'l Fazl's contribution to history, these three volumes should be analysed as a single unit.

The first volume of the *Akbar Nama* begins with a detailed account of Akbar's birth and his horoscope. It briefly discusses the theories of cosmology and cosmogony prevalent in different religions; mentions Adam, various prophets, the Turks, Alan qo'a, the mythical ancestor of the Mughals, and her progeny. The history of Babur is summarised from the *Tuzuk i-Baburi*, but the account of Humayun's reign is based on a large number of sources. The volume brings Akbar's reign to the middle of the 17th regnal year (17 September, 1572) corresponding to the 30th year of Akbar's life by the solar reckoning. It was finally completed in 1596. Copyists, binders and subsequent publishers have divided this volume into two, the first volume ending with Akbar's accession and the second in 1572.

The second volume as planned by Abu'l Fazl was to run from the middle of the 17th year of Akbar's reign to the middle of the 47th year, but Abu'l Fazl presented it incomplete to Akbar in the 42nd year. Before his death, he had produced an addition to the end of the 46th year (end of February, 1602); which came to be known as the third volume of the *Akbar Nama.*

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 69-70; Lowe, pp. 68-69.

[2] *A'in*, III, p. 200; Jarrett, III, pp. 475-76.

Abu'l Fazl's approach to history was what Western historiography classes as Romanticism. He considered history as "Philosophy teaching by example"; the philosopher and sufi in him overbore the historian. Ethical and moralising elements vaulted over historical analysis and made his writings subjective.

An analysis of the *Akbar Nama* shows that Abu'l Fazl does not hesitate to record facts, merely because they are damaging to the image of Akbar. He defends the rôle of his hero in making history, and justifies his judgment on moral and pragmatic grounds. He attaches great importance to any trifle that might prove Akbar a "Perfect Man." For example, he associates Akbar's birth with miraculous and supernatural happenings,[1] and thus takes advantage of the Hindu and Muslim traditions that the births of prophets and the incarnation of deities are accompanied by abnormal happenings. He ignores the fact that Humayun's miserable poverty did not allow the festivities and largesses he describes. Akbar's childish repugnance to education is glossed over on the basis that prophets had been illiterate. The theory is intended to arouse unqualified obedience of his subjects on the ground that all his administrative measures and institutions were divinely inspired.

The early years of Akbar's reign are described as a period when the Emperor preferred to remain "under the veil of insouciance" and regarded his youth "as the veil of his divinely bestowed wisdom." He interprets such rash undertakings as the taming of ferocious elephants as a grand demonstration of his God-given powers, proving him uniquely worthy of the obedience of those to whom he had left "political and financial matters."[2] This does injustice both to Akbar and history; the only redeeming feature is that the language of mysticism helped the author to preserve some interesting reminiscences of Akbar's childhood which, recorded in plain language, would have never been palatable to him.

The years between 1560 and 1564 were the most formative in Akbar's career. Early in 1560 he acted as a willing instrument of Maham Anaga, but her influence did not last for more than a year. Abu'l Fazl often says that "veil was not yet removed from his (Akbar's) world-illuminating countenance,"

[1] *AN*, I, p. 19; Bev, I, p. 56.

[2] *Ibid*, I, pp. 72-75; *Ibid*, I, pp. 111-16.

but there was no "petticoat government" after 1561. He describes in detail cliques of Maham Anaga and her opponents, and recounts the atrocities of her son Adham Khan, yet he supports Maham[1] because of her early services to Akbar.

Abu'l Fazl recounts with epic fervour Akbar's conquests and ambitions to found a vast empire. It was not that, however, but the process of consolidation and the introduction of a sound administrative machinery under a strong central authority which distinguish Akbar from such rulers as Chingiz, Hulagu and Timur. Akbar's conquests are not simple acts of aggression; they were intended to bestow the blessings of a sound administration and to bring as large as possible a section of humanity under the influence of wide tolerance. Indeed, Akbar fought relentlessly against his neighbours, subduing recalcitrant Rajputs, unruly Afghans, restless *zamindars*, and rebellious Mughal chiefs, but the resultant stability and peace offered Abu'l Fazl ample moral justification. To him, Akbar's wars were not only practically necessary, but morally imperative.

Such motives made the conventional phrases of Islamic historians obsolete and antiquated. In Abu'l Fazl's terminology, heresy was nothing but parochialism and narrowmindedness; those who showed it he condemned, irrespective of religion or race.

By a similar process of reasoning, Abu'l Fazl describes rebellions as the result of "evil disposition" and "wicked thoughts" emanating from bad company and wrong counsels. The fall of rebels is inevitable and is secured without much effort on the part of the loyal.[2]

Describing Asaf Khan's conquest of Gondwana (Garh Katanga) in 1564, he finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. Rani Durgawati meets his criteria of good government and heroism; her only fault is the refusal to submit before the Mughal arms. He unreservedly praises her merits, attributing her resistance sometimes to her pride in the strength of her arms, and sometimes to the poor diplomacy of Asaf Khan. However, he finds solace in her message to Asaf Khan.

"If the just King was here in person it would have been

[1] *AN*, I, pp. 142-43, 175-76; Bev, I, pp. 220-22, 271-73.

[2] *Ibid*, II, p. 34, 198; *Ibid*, II, pp. 30, 56.

proper for me to wait upon him. What does this fellow (Asaf Khan) know of my rank?"[1]

He unsparingly condemns antiquated views, narrowmindedness and bigotry, whether among Hindus or Muslims. He pays tribute to the honesty, courage and abilities of Raja Todar Mal but, accusing him of bigotry and spite, he says "If he had not stuck to his own opinions, he would have been one of the spiritually great."[2]

As one of many victims of the bigotry and arrogance of the Court 'ulama, his use of strong language against them is natural. He criticises the Shi'i Mulla Ahmad for using immoderate language against the Sunnis and for his "despicable spirit";[3] yet he does not spare Mirza Faulad whose zeal in Sunnism prompted him to murder the Mulla, and calls the execution of the Mirza and his associates "a cause of guidance to many who had gone astray."[4]

The third volume of the *Akbar Nama*, the *A'in i-Akbari*, is the enduring memorial of Abu'l Fazl's fame as a historian. It astounded his contemporaries, and has earned the admiration of all later and modern historians. It occupies a distinctive place both as a monument of industry and a feat of painstaking research.

It is divided into five books. The first two books form the first volume, the third book the second and the fourth and fifth books the third of the published texts.

The first book begins by describing the Divine source of the Royalty. It then describes 90 *a'ins* or regulations. The first fourteen deal with the imperial treasuries, the mints and their workmen; the manner of refining gold and silver; the methods of extracting gold from silver and silver from ashes; the origin of metals and their specific gravity; and the imperial coins. *A'ins* 15 to 30 deal with the imperial harem, the encampment of the imperial court and the army, festive illuminations; the ensigns of royalty, the royal seals and the administration of the imperial household and the Emperor's day of abstinence. *A'ins* 31 and 32 deal with the wardrobe; *a'ins* 33 and 34 describe the nature of colour and the art of writing and painting. *A'ins* 35 to 48 describe such matters as the great guns, and their cleaning; the pay of matchlockmen, the imperial elephant stables, the classification of elephants, their diet, the servants of the elephant stables, elephant harness, elephants for the Emperor's use and the manner of their riding, and lastly, the fines imposed for negligence in the care of elephants. The stables for the imperial horses, the fodder, harness, officers, regulations for branding and for keeping up the full complement of horses and fines for negligence are described in the *a'ins* 49 to 60. A similar description of the establishment for maintaining milch cows and mules is given in *a'ins* 61 to 71. *A'ins* 72 to 76 deal with the manner in which Akbar spent his time, the regulations for admission to Court, the salutations known as *kornish* and *taslim*, miscellaneous points of etiquette, and the muster of men. *A'in* 77, the most important of all, and oddly out of place, deals with the *rah-numuni* (spiritual guidance) the Emperor offered to his subjects.

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[1] *AN*, II, p. 209, 213-14; *Bev*, II, p. 324, 329, 331.

[2] *Ibid*, III, p. 569; *Ibid*, III, p. 862.

[3] *Ibid*, III, p. 527; *Ibid*, III, p. 804.

[4] *Ibid*, III, p. 527; *Ibid*, III, p. 805.

A'ins 78 to 84 describe the muster of elephants, horses, camels, cattle and mules, further regulations for their care, and the staging of animal fights. *A'ins* 85 to 90 discuss public works, the price of building material, the wages of labourers and the weight of different kinds of wood.

The second book comprises 30 *a'ins*. The first nine deal with the division of the army and its beasts of burden, the *mansabdars*, the "gentlemen troopers" or *ahadis*, the troopers, the infantry, regulations for branding animals, and regulations about mounting guard. *A'ins* 10 to 19 describe regulations regarding the official news writers, the *sanads* and *farmans*, the order of the seals, the manner in which salaries were paid, loans to officers, donations, alms, the ceremony of weighing the Emperor and *suyurghals* (grants for religious and charitable purposes). *A'in* 26 deals with the *mirbahri*, the department maintaining river flotillas. *A'ins* 27 to 29 refer to hunting and the food allowed to the leopards and other wild animals in captivity. *A'in* 30 gives a list of the *mansabdars* and the learned men and poets known to the Court.

The third book of 16 *a'ins* is concerned with imperial administration. It begins with a description of the Divine era, and then gives notes upon the eras of the Hindus, Turks and Islam. *A'ins* 1 to 14 embody the rules for the provincial governors, and for *faujdars, mir'adl, qazis, kotwals,* collectors of revenue, treasures, instruments of measurement, and the various classes paying land revenue; it lists the imposts abolished by Akbar, and describes the nineteen years revenue rates. *A'in* 15 gives an account of the ten years' settlement and a detailed description of the twelve provinces. The account of each province and sub-division is preceded by short biographical and historical notes. The history of Delhi and Kashmir is rather fuller. *A'in* 16 deals with the *kuroh*, known to generations as the *kos*, the measure of distance which Akbar attempted to standardise.

The fourth book begins with an account of ethnography of India, its boundaries, a general description of the seasons, its natural beauty and its crops. Some notes upon the geography of the world in the traditional Perso-Arab style, are then offered.

The learning of the Hindus, their eighteen sciences, their *sahitya* (rhetorical composition) their *sangit* (music), *rajniti* (polity), and their administration of justice, the four periods of their religious life, Divine worship, alms giving, their belief in incarnations, their prohibited foods, their ceremonies in cooking and eating, rules of fasting, and expiation, marriage customs, ornaments and dress, decorative art, festivals, ceremonies at death, and sacred places of pilgrimage are described in detail. The description of the Jains is, not surprisingly full; but the description of Buddhism is sketchy. The last chapter but one deals with immigrants into India, from Adam to Humayun. The book concludes with a chapter on saints and sufi orders of India, and includes biographies of some non-Indian saints too.

The fifth book is very short, but important. It comprises only two chapters; a collection of sayings of Akbar, and Abu'l Fazl's own autobiography.

The administrative framework of Akbar's reign, which endowed his rule with distinctive features of its own, crystallised between 1574 and 1585. The *A'in i-Akbari*, intended to serve as a handbook of administration, rarely gives the history of the evolution of the rules and regulations. Abu'l Fazl's attempts to invest Akbar's institutes and regulations with a spiritual halo has made their language stilted, and their reading boring. He makes much of verbal coincidences, whether relating to *mansabdars*, *ahadis* or the regulations about salutations.

The needs prompting some of the regulations can be gleaned from the *Akbar Nama*, but the reasons for failure and changes can be seen only incidentally when Abu'l Fazl is seeking to expose the disloyalty and incompetence of some officer or grandee. References to heavy fines imposed for the neglect of the various duties are intended to exhibit the shortcomings of officers or servants, rather than defects in the rules. However, the analysis of the duties of such officers as *faujdar*, *kotwal*, and *'amalguzar* reveal to some extent the new outlook towards urban and rural social life.

The statistical accounts of the twelve *subas*, which forms three-fourths of the second volume, are evidence of the author's skill in arranging and interpreting a mass of data of different categories. The study of epigraphical, archaeological and numismatic sources did not occur to Abu'l Fazl; his ancient history of towns is based on the *mahatmyas* (eulogistic guide books) of the Hindu centres of pilgrimage, on folk tales, and on the poetry of Rajput bards. The *Raja-tarangini* is the main source of his history of Kashmir. Although modern researches have rendered his historical account obsolete, he deserves credit for his ability to disentangle from the skein of legendary material a connected account of local history.

Like James Tod (1782-1835) Abu'l Fazl describes the history of the Rajputs on the basis of the material embodied in the *Rasos*[1] of the Rajput bards. The source of his account of Prithvi Raj is the *Prithvi Raj Raso* of Chandra Barda'i, but he points out that the Persian histories hold the Raja to have been killed on the battlefield.[2] He finds the Rajput accounts of their own Samants (chiefs) irreconcilable with reason.[3] He notes that Raja Jai Chandra of Qanauj was liberal minded, and that many natives of Iran and Turan were engaged in his service.[4] The Padmini legend is described in connection with the history of Mewar.[5]

The history of the Delhi Sultans is given under the *subah* of Delhi and that of the regional Sultans under the history of the provinces. He eulogises Balban's administration, but reprehends Amir Khusrau; for wasting his talents, in the *Qiranu's Sa'dain*, upon a subject so trivial as the meeting of Kaiqubad and Bughra Khan. He denounces Sultan 'Ala'u'd Din for treacherously murdering his uncle Sultan Jalalu'd Din, but extols his reforms. He states that some historians try to absolve Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq of the crime of patricide but the haste with which the pavilion was erected to receive his father smacks of guilty designs.[1]

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[1] *A'in*, II, pp. 147-48; Jarrett, II, pp. 305-07.

[2] *Ibid*, II, p. 148; *Ibid*, II, p. 307.

[3] *Ibid*, II, p. 147; *Ibid*, II, p. 305.

[4] *Ibid*, II, p. 147; *Ibid*, II, p. 305.

[5] *Ibid*, II, p. 129; *Ibid*, II, pp. 274-75.

His history of the provincial Sultans of the fifteenth century mentions some important local saints. Kabir is called a muwahhid (unitarian) and is referred to in connection with the account of Konarak in Orissa,[2] as well as of Awadh (Ayodhya).[3] Both claimed to contain his grave. Abu'l Fazl testifies to the popularity of Kabir's verses and achievements, and extols his catholicity, broadmindedness and spiritual eminence.

His description of Jagannath and Konarak is very vivid. According to him, Kala Pahar, the general of Sulaiman Kararani, who conquered Orissa, defaced the image of Jagannath and threw it into the sea, and it was subsequently restored. He regards the temple of Konarak as a most wonderful structure; he offers measurements and an enthusiastic description of its portals, flights of steps and colossal statues.[4] Such exact notices of buildings show a power of observation, equalled in Islamic tradition only by a few travellers.

The third volume of the *A'in i-Akbari* is a unique contribution of Abu'l Fazl to history and philosophy. It is largely based on al-Biruni but the *Sarvadarshan Sangrah* by Madhava Acharya the *Sahitya Darpana* by Visvanath Kaviraj and some other medieval Sanskrit works too seem to have been drawn upon. The oral information supplied by Hindu and Jaina scholars in Akbar's court, and the controversies held there, equipped him with further knowledge and helped him to understand the Hindu philosophy, beliefs and way of life. Abu'l Fazl himself was ignorant of Sanskrit and had to depend upon interpreters; but he overcame the difficulty of discordant versions by painstaking collation and deep analysis.

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[1] *A'in*, II, p. 150; Jarrett, II, p. 311.

[2] *Ibid*, II, p. 52; *Ibid*, II, p. 141.

[3] *Ibid*, II, p. 78. Abu'l Fazl says that the grave of Kabir is at Ratanpur in Avadh. Jarrett, II, p. 182.

[4] *Ibid*, II, p. 52; *Ibid*, II, pp. 139-40.

Abu'l Fazl had specific motives and definite purpose in covering the ground already explored by al-Biruni. First of all, al-Biruni's work was in Arabic; but the language of the Mughal elite was Persian. Secondly, the image of Hinduism presented by the Persian works of Banakati and Hafiz Abru was unreliable and distorted; they confused Abu'l Fazl's contemporaries. This volume was intended to present to the new elite an authentic and true picture of Hinduism; it served the same needs as Akbar's translation bureau.

Like al-Biruni, Abu'l Fazl was convinced by his studies that the Hindus were monotheists. A scholar trained in ibn 'Arabi's school of thought, he had no difficulty in believing that the reverence Hindus paid to images was not idolatry. He says:

> "The writer of these pages has exhaustively discussed the subject with many enlightened and upright men, and it has become evident that these images of some chosen soul nearest in approach to the throne of God, are fashioned as aids to fix the mind and keep the thoughts from wandering, while the worship of God alone is required as indispensable. In all their ceremonial observances and usages they ever implore the favour of the world-illuminating sun and regard the pure essence of the Supreme Being as transcending the idea of power in operation."[1]

The *A'in i-Akbari* elaborates upon the theme which Amir Khusrau had earlier described in his *Nuh Sipihr*[2] in rather a sketchy manner. It presents Hindus as religious, affectionate, hospitable, genial and frank. It extols their love of scientific pursuits; their austerity; and their industry, loyalty and truthfulness. Abu'l Fazl reinforces this analysis, which seems to unite the virtues of the Rajputs and the Khattris, by saying:

> "Their knowledge of affairs, capacity in execution, recklessness of valour, fidelity, especially in times of difficulty, their devoted attachment and disinterested service, and other eminent good qualities are beyond measure great."

However, he does not fail to point out:

"And yet there are many obdurate and pitiless spirits, devoid

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 5; Jarrett, III, p. 8.

[2] *Nuh Sipihr* (Bombay, 1931), pp. 149-65.

> of gentle courtesy who for the merest trifle will rise to the shedding of blood, and marvellous are the tales told of these ravening fiends in the guise of angels."[1]

His analysis of the causes of misunderstanding and dissensions between different religions is as true today as it was then, and can apply to the tensions and conflicts of all ages. While the world is never lacking in prudent and well-intentioned men, the main reasons for conflicts and quarrels are the following:

1. Diversity of languages and inability to understand the essence of each other's beliefs.
2. Distance precluding contact between Indian savants and the scholars of other lands and the scarcity of competent interpreters.
3. Indolence and lack of interest in men of different lands, to the thoughts and beliefs of others.
4. Shortsightedness and want of patience for research.
5. Hidebound prejudice, unwillingness to abandon narrow traditional beliefs, and inability to submit to reason.
6. Religious persecution by rulers which discouraged even the few brains from meeting each other and arriving at truth through discussions.
7. The domination of unprincipled men who vitiated the atmosphere of inquiry.[2]

Abu'l Fazl lays the principal blame for bigotry and dissension upon rulers, and concludes:

> "Each one, regarding his own persuasion as alone true has set himself to the persecution of other worshippers of God, and the shedding of blood and the ruining of reputation have become the symbol of religious orthodoxy. Were the eyes of the mind possessed of true vision, each individual would withdraw from this undiscriminating turmoil and attend rather to his own solicitudes than interfere in the concern of others."[3]

Abu'l Fazl probably recognised that his work was no match for al-Biruni's *India* in depth of analysis; he hoped that with time and leisure he might first arrange in due order the systems of philosophy he described, and compare them with the Grecian and Iranian schools, contributing some original opinions of his own.

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 42; Jarrett, III, p. 126.

[2] *Ibid*, III, pp. 2-4; *Ibid*, III, pp. 3-6.

[3] *Ibid*, III, p. 4; *Ibid*, III, p. 5.

However, he urged his Muslim readers to study dispassionately his account of Hindu learning and, "putting aside the estrangements of ignorance" compare it with the theosophy of the ishraqis, the teachings of the sufis, the peripatetic tradition, and scholastic theology in an effort to abandon their prejudices and obscurantism and acquire some breadth of vision.[1]

Apart from its educative value, the *A'in i-Akbari* adds to al-Biruni in its account of certain aspects of the life of contemporary Hindus and Jainas. It finds no surviving trace of the true Kshatriya of the solar and lunar dynasties.[2] Yogic postures, Abu'l Fazl finds amazing;[3] he describes with interest the knowledge of the experts of *sakuna* (augury). He concludes his account of the Hindu pilgrim centres with the remark:

> "O Thou that seekest after divine knowledge, learn the wisdom of these Hindu legends. Each particle among collected atoms is a sublime temple of worship. May the Almighty deliver mankind from the wanderings of a vain imagination. . . ."[4]

His description of music includes contemporary developments and local peculiarities. He informs us that Amir Khusrau invented *qaul* and *tarana* by combining several Indian and Iranian styles. Man Singh Tonwar, the raja of Gwaliar, (1486-1517) was the father of *dhurupad.* The account concludes with a note on *akharas* (musical contests) and Akbar's patronage to musicians and interest in music.[5]

The chapters on immigrants is intended to present the country as a land of opportunities, hospitable to all. Much of it is legendary and has been borrowed from the *Shah Nama* of *Firdausi*, the *Muruj al-zahb* of Mas'udi (died 956) and the *Rauzatus' Safa* of *Mirkhund.* He notes that legends of Adam's fall from paradise are not corroborated by any Sanskrit works. About Mahmud of Ghazna, he says:

> "Fanatical bigots representing India as a country of unbelievers at war with Islam incited his unsuspecting nature to the wreck

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[1] *A'in*, III, pp. 47-48; Jarrett, III, pp. 141-42.

[2] *Ibid*, III, p. 44; *Ibid*, III, pp. 130-31.

[3] *Ibid*, III, p. 55; *Ibid*, III, pp. 195-96.

[4] *Ibid*, III, pp. 138-40; *Ibid*, III, pp. 332, 336.

[5] *Ibid*, III, pp. 109, 114; *Ibid*, III, pp. 266, 273.

of honour and the shedding of blood and plunder of the virtuous."[1]

His account of non-Indian saints is based mainly on the *Nafhatu'l Uns* of Jami but the bulk of the chapter containing short biographical notes of the Indian saints is his own.

Before concluding the work with his own autobiography he records two hundred and thirty-seven sayings of Akbar, which at comleast show how many ideas Akbar and Abu'l Fazl held in common.

The Tabaqat i-Akbar Shahi or the Tabaqat i-Akbari

Of the histories written in Akbar's reign, the *Tabaqat i-Akbari* occupies a very significant place. Its author Khwaja Nizamu'd Din Ahmad was the son of a favourite of Babur named Khwaja Muhammad Muqim Harawi, whom Babur had appointed his *diwan i-buyutat.*[2] He was one of the few soldiers to accompany Humayun to Agra following his defect at Chausa.[3] After Humayun's flight from Agra he stayed behind in India and rejoined the Emperor in 1555. In 1567-68, when Akbar marched against 'Ali Quli who had rebelled in Jaunpur, Muhammad Muqim and his young son Khwaja Nizamu'd Din were left at Agra.[4]

Nizamu'd Din was well educated, and interested in scholars of all shades of opinion. Such orthodox scholars as Shaikh Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi and Mulla 'Abdu'l-Qadir Badauni received considerable help and assistance from him. He took part in a large number of Akbar's expeditions, served as *bakhshi* in Gujarat, and held several other offices in Ajmer and Malwa. Through his official position, he had detailed personal knowledge of all phases of Akbar's history. He served on the board of the compilers of the *Tarikh i-Alfi,* and was a recognised historian. He died at the age of 45 in 1003/1594.

The major portion of the *Tabaqat i-Akbari* was completed in 1001/1592-93; the account of 1002 was added by the author before his death. The work is a detailed general history of India. It runs from 377/987-88 to 1002 H. It is divided into nine sections, of which the first two comprise the history of the Delhi

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 159; Jarrett, III, p. 337.

[2] *Tabaqat*, II, p. 28.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 44.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 211.

Sultans and the Mughals and the rest deal with the Deccan, Gujarat, Malwa, Bengal, Jaunpur, Kashmir, Sind and Multan. Nizamu'd Din intended to add a geographical account of India, but was not able to complete it.

He unhesistatingly acknowledges his indebtedness to the *Akbar Nama* and the *A'in i-Akbari*,[1] which although not formally presented to Akbar were available to him in draft. He mentions twenty-eight other works upon which he drew; a few of these survive no longer.

The history of Babur is based mainly on the *Babur Nama (Tuzuk)* but is greatly enriched by an account, derived from his father, of the conspiracy hatched by Babur's *wazir* Nizamu'd Din 'Ali Khalifa, to deprive Humayun of the throne.[2] Nazamu'd Din makes much use of the *Tarikh i-Alfi* taking most of his account of Humayun from it, and some of Akbar's history.

He analyses and evaluates his material dispassionately. He presents an objective account of Rana Sanga; comparing his magnanimity with that of Sultan Muzaffar of Gujarat (1512-25 towards Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa (1511-31), he says, "Sultan Muzaffar helped Mahmud Khalji, but the Rana, after-taking him captive, gave him back his kingdom."[3] Himself a pious Muslim, he was loyal to Akbar, and his relations with all nobles were cordial. His history of Akbar's reign is a careful summary, neatly arranged, of important political events.

Muntakhabu't Tawarikh

While Abu'l Fazl offers no clear account of the conflicts and contradictions of Indian society under Akbar, and contents himself with general and eloquent declamations against bigotry and narrow–mindedness, the *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh* of Mulla 'Abdu'l Qadir Badauni luxuriates in such ramified details of all these tensions, both petty squabbles and heroic conflicts, that one could almost believe he wrote to glorify the pettiness of vision and stinginess of soul of the most hide-bound of the traditional 'ulama.

Closer examination of his work shows, however, that this is not all he sought; for while throwing out an uncompromising and almost despairing challenge to the values of the society which Akbar strove to build, and while exhibiting the most minute and pious respect to all the traditions for which the orthodox 'ulama stood, he found the 'ulama of his own age wanting. He sees himself a man of brilliance and promise, the product of a perfect education, the possessor (thanks to God) of a brilliant and piercing mind, a pattern of all that is best in a thousand years of Islamic tradition; but ignored by the conventional 'ulama on the one hand, sunk as they are in a slothful self-conceit and devoted only to the accumulation of wealth and influence, and despised on the other by the worldly and God-forsaken Emperor and his perdition-damned helpers and advisers. Confident in the sureness of judgment conferred by his proficiency in the secular knowledge of the age, and certain of his personal piety and orthodoxy, he conceived himself, alone of his contemporaries, as qualified to advise in the construction upon Indian soil of an enlightened Islamic state. He imagined a strong government headed by a monarch of unimpeachable Sunni orthodoxy, energetic alike in his suppression of Shi'is and other heretic and his degradation of the misbelieving and idolatrous Hindus; counselled in every matter, great and small, by himself and other scholars of like mind, to the exclusion alike of the old-fashioned orthodox, and the new modelled assimilators who seemed to him bent upon secularising and Hinduising the pure faith of Islam. No consideration of pity and clemency might be suffered to blunt the ruler's stern sense of duty to fight in the path of God; no man of honour could fail to be moved by such a compelling appeal.

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[1] Tabaqat, I, p. V.

[2] *Ibid*, II, pp. 28-9.

[3] *Tabaqat*, III, pp. 103-04; compare this account with *Mir'at i-Sikandari* (Bombay, 1890), pp. 154-55.

Yet Badauni, after a life of over twenty years as a courtier, failed; he suffered the laughter and amused contempt of almost all, and enjoyed the respect he so coveted from none. He ended his life so obscurely that the very fact of his death passed unrecorded; what preserved his memory was the *Muntakhabu't-Tawarikh*, *Najatu'r Rashid*, and a few minor works.

'Abdu'l Qadir bin Muluk Shah bin Hamid Shah was born at Toda (Toda Bhim in Rajasthan) on 17 Rabi' II 947/21 August 1540.[1] Shortly after his birth, his family removed to Bhasawar,

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[1] *MT*, I, p. 363.

18 miles north east. When he was twelve, his father took him to Sambhal (Western U.P.) and enrolled him as the disciple of Shaikh Hatim Sambhali,[1] he also studied under several other eminent scholars, and in 966/1558-59 he joined the seminary of Shaikh Mubarak[2] at Agra becoming the school fellow of Faizi and the much younger Abu'l Fazl. Both the teacher and the pupil became fond of each other. At Agra he lived in the house of a nobleman named Mihr 'Ali Beg Silduz.[3] With him he travelled to Qanauj, Lucknow, Jaunpur and Banaras; in the fortress near Chunar he visited the cave where, in the 1530's, Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus had long practised austere exercises. On 2 April 1562 his father died at Agra;[4] a year later his maternal grandfather Makhdum Ashraf,[5] who had taught him his first lessons in Arabic, also died. These two losses were a severe blow for 'Abdu'l Qadir, and put an end to his carefree life.

At Agra he had come in contact with several important scholars and noblemen. During Bairam's regency, the visit of Shaikh Abu'l Fath Gujarati, a son in law of Mir Saiyid Muhammad of Jaunpur, revived 'Abdu'l-Qadir's earlier contacts with the Mahdawis and he learnt from him the Mahdawi form of *zikr*.[6] He was a welcome visitor to the *khanqah* of Shaikh Salim Chishti[7] but when he made Badaun his permanent residence, with occasional long stays at Agra, he came to be called Badauni, a resident of Badaun in Western U.P. In 1567-68 he married his second wife;[8] the first, he never mentions. Shortly afterwards, he entered the service of Husain Khan Tukarya[9] and remained friendly with him until the Khan's death in 1576. To Badauni, the Khan was a paragon of Sunni piety and orthodoxy.[10]

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[1] *MT*, III, pp 2-3; Haig, pp. 6-7.

[2] *MT*, III, pp. 75-76; Haig, pp. 119-20.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 32; Lowe, p. 26.

[4] *Ibid*, II, p. 53; *Ibid*, p. 51.

[5] *Ibid*, II, p. 64; *Ibid*, p. 62.

[6] *Ibid*, III, pp. 47-48; *Ibid*, pp. 77-78.

[7] *Ibid*, III, pp. 12-13; Haig, pp. 21-23.

[8] *Ibid*, II, p. 105; Lowe, pp. 108-09.

[9] Tukariya is his popular nickname. In his zeal for orthodoxy, he had ordered, while governor of Lahore, that Hindus should sew a patch of cloth (*tukri*) on their garments to distinguish them from the Muslims. *MT*, II, pp. 223-24; Lowe, pp. 227-28.

[10] *MT*, II, p. 222; Lowe, pp. 226-27.

In 1571-72, when Badauni was working as the *sadr* of Kant o-Gola (Shahjahanpur in U.P.) under Husain Khan, he fell in love with someone, probably a boy, at Makanpur (in Kanpur) where he had gone to visit the tomb of Shah Madar (traditionally 1315-1436). He nearly died of the sword-cuts inflicted on him by enraged relations and friends of his beloved, but a surgeon at Bangarmao (east of Lucknow) saved his life.[1]

By that time his reputation as a scholar was well established. At the end of April 1574, he was introduced to the Court by Jamal Khan Qurchi and Hakim 'Ainu'l Mulk. He says:

> "And since in those days the chattels of learning had considerable value, I was dignified with the honour of conversation with His Majesty at the very moment I was introduced to him, and was enrolled among the attendants at his assembly. The Emperor engaged me in debates with the 'ulama who boasted of the versatility of their knowledge and attached importance to no man. His Majesty himself acted as the judge. By the grace of God, the innate capacity and the sharpness of my intellect, and the boldness inseparable from youth, I overcame most of them. Since at the time of my presentation His Majesty was told that this learned man of Badaun could smash the head of Hajji Ibrahim Sihrindi (in debates); he wished that I should be used."[2]

Shaik 'Abdu'n Nabi was displeased that Badauni had been admitted to Court without a recommendation from him. In the early phase of the discussions in the 'Ibadat Khana, he was invincible. By interpreting problems such as the legality of *mut* in a manner that suited the Emperor[3] he impressed the Court both with the depth of his learning and his power of argument. He did not realise that he was striking at the root of the very order which he was later to defend so unsuccessfully. Akbar ordered him to keep an eye on the disorderly 'ulama,[4] and enjoyed his witty remarks at their expense.

He was appointed an *imam*, and a *mansabdar* of twenty; in this capacity he had to bring horses for branding,[5] but he failed. He wavered between the life of a *mansabdar* and a holder of *madad*

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 136-37; Lowe, pp. 139-41.

[2] *Ibid*, II, pp. 172-73; *Ibid*, pp. 175-76.

[3] See *Supra*.

[4] *MT*, II p. 202; Lowe, p. 205.

[5] *Ibid*, II, p. 206; *Ibid*, p. 209.

i-ma'ash grant. In January 1576 he applied for leave, but the Emperor refused. Excusing him from inspection of his horses, he permitted him to enjoy the revenue of 1000 *bighas* of land, then the salary of a *mansabdar* of twenty. In the *farman*, however, it was entered as a *madad i-ma'ash*.[1] The position was anomalous; Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi argued that none in Badauni's category enjoyed such a liberal *madad i-ma'ash;* while the department of the *bakhshi* did not recognise his status as a *mansabdar* since he was exempted from presenting his horses for inspection. The Emperor, instead of making a clear exception to the rules, promised to supplement his income by gifts; but about eighteen years afterwards, when writing his history, he recalled that he had received gifts on one or two occasions only. The enlarged scope of the debates in the 'Ibadat Khana reduced his importance, and he began to find himself a fish out of water.

In 1576, Raja Man Singh of Amber was commissioned to lead his famous expedition against Maharana Pratap.[2] The Emperor marched to Ajmer with his court. To gain the merits of participation in *jihad*, Badauni asked Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi to obtain him the Emperor's permission to join the army. The Shaikh paid no heed; but Naqib Khan recommended his request to the Emperor.[3] When asked to explain the reason for his request he did not mention his earnestness for *jihad* but hypocritically said that he was determined to dye his black beard and moustaches in blood for the Imperial cause. Pleased, Akbar uttered a formal prayer for his success. To display his loyalty, Badauni extended his hand to kiss Akbar's foot; the Emperor declined the honour, and drew his foot out of the way.[4]

In November 1577, a son was born to him at Bhasawar. He took the occasion to gain the further favour of the Emperor, by offering him gold coins and asking him to chose the child's name. His colleague Hafiz Muhammad Amin urged him to have the Qur'an recited for the long life of the child, but Badauni did not bother.[5] He obtained leave for five months, went to Bhasawar and overstayed for an year. In September, 1578 the Imperial Camp was pitched near Toda Bhim; he presented a book entitled *Kitabu'l Ahadis*, a collection of forty traditions about the merits of *jihad*. His absence without leave was overlooked,[1] but Badauni felt that his rivals had poisoned the Emperor's ears against him. When Akbar returned to Fathpur-Sikri and the second cycle of debates began, Badauni found himself relegated to a minor position. His attempts to defend Shaikh 'Abdu'n-Nabi's execution of the brahman of Mathura, displeased the Emperor. After the signing of the *mahzar*, Badauni left for Bhasawar, and remained in a state of indecision about his future. Two months later, the Emperor was in Ajmer, and Badauni was presented. His supporters recommended his case; but the Emperor told them that he compelled nobody to serve against his wishes, and Badauni could resign if he wished; but if he did, his grant would be reduced to half. Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, not yet banished to Mecca, informed the Emperor that if he resigned, 700 to 800 *bighas* would be a proper grant.[2] This did not satisfy Badauni, and he decided to serve the Court.

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 207; Lowe, p. 210.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 166; Bev, III, pp. 236-37; According to Abu'l Fazl Akbar gave him the title of Farzand (son).

[3] *MT*, II, p. 228; Lowe, p. 233.

[4] *Ibid*, II, p. 229; *Ibid*, p. 234.

[5] *Ibid*, II, p. 252; *Ibid*, p. 259.

During the rebellion of 1580-81 he again absented himself and stayed at Bhasawar where he had fallen in love with someone whom he calls Mazhari, apparently another boy. In him he saw some sort of Divine manifestation.[3] Politically it was a critical period. A number of 'ulama and sufis were fomenting rebellion; many were suspected; and serious action was taken against those of proven disloyalty.[4] When Akbar was approaching Kabul, Sadr i-Jahan was ordered to submit a list of all the members of *ahl i-sa'adat*.[5] Badauni's absence was noted but on Nizamu'd Din Ahmad's recommendation he was reported as sick. Nizamu'd Din wrote urgent letters asking Badauni to present himself at the Camp as soon as he could. Seized with love, both earthly and Divine, Badauni felt unable to wait upon the Emperor until 2 December 1581, when he had returned to Fathpur. Akbar asked the reason for his absence; the kindly intervention of Abu'l Fazl, who said that Badauni held a grant of *madad*

[1] *MT*, II, p. 255; Lowe, p. 262.
[2] *Ibid*, II, pp. 275-76; *Ibid*, p. 283-84.
[3] *Ibid*, II, p. 296; *Ibid*, p. 305.
[4] See *Supra*.
[5] *MT*, II, pp. 296-97; Lowe, p. 305.

i-ma'ash and was not obliged to attend at Court, ended the matter.[1]

For the rest of his life, he remained attached to the Court. Although an indispensable member of the Translation Bureau, nothing was more alien to his temperament than the literary activity at Court.[2] He was ambitious, and unwilling to retire; yet he found the work of translating Sanskrit classics totally repellent.

In 1590-91, he commenced his theologico-mystical work *Najatu'r Rashid.* The same year his mother died and he was given five months' leave to go to Badaun. Before he left, the *Sadr i-Jahan* twice asked him to perform *sijdah*, but he refused, and Akbar ordered that he be left alone.[3] He over stayed his leave again, this time because of illness. Meanwhile a book entitled *Khirad Afza*, which Sultan Salima Begum wanted, was found to be missing from the Imperial Library. It was borrowed by Badauni. He was summoned, but hung back. The Emperor ordered his *madad i-ma'ash* grant resumed, and neither Abu'l Fazl nor Nizamu'd Din Ahmad succeeded in allaying his displeasure. Finally, in September-October 1592, Badauni presented himself at the Imperial camp at Bhimbhar, but the medical certificate of Hakim Ainu' Mulk, the letter signed by eminent citizens of Badaun and the importunities of the courtiers were all unavailing;[4] he remained out of favour. Faizi then in the Deccan, learned of Badauni's misfortune, and wrote a strong letter of recommendation to the Emperor;[5] but before the letter arrived he was restored to favour.

In October 1594 his patron Khwaja Nizamu'd Din Ahmad died. Badauni was a candidate for the much coveted post of the custodian of Khwaja Mu'inu'd Din Chishti's tomb at Ajmer. The Emperor did not deny his suitability but said that his literary talents had made him indispensable at Court. He was ordered to re-write *Bahru'l Amsar* in elegant Persian.[6] He performed *zaminbos*, and undertook the work with an appearance of pleasure. Soon, he learned that the Ajmer post was awarded to another. It was a mortal blow to his ambitions; he remained at Court, but disappointed, disgruntled and frustrated.

[1] *MT*, II, p. 296; Lowe, p. 305.
[2] See *Supra*.
[3] *MT*, II, pp. 376-77; *Ibid*, p. 389.
[4] *Ibid*, II, pp. 383-84; *Ibid*, pp. 396-97.
[5] *Ibid*, III, pp. 303-05; *Ibid*, pp. 419-20.
[6] *Ibid*, II, p. 401; *Ibid*, p. 415.

In 1590-91 he had completed his abridgment of Kalhana's *Raja Tarangini* and decided to write a history of India from the advent of Muslim rule to his own days.[1] He had already started the *Najatu'r Rashid*; and cross-references show that it was written simultaneously with the history, and that both together were intended to prove that Akbar's administrative policies and the heterodoxy of his favourites had overthrown Sunnism. The *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh* is meant to destroy the faith of the Sunnis in Akbar; the *Najatu'r Rashid* seeks to reiterate the principles on which orthodox Sunnism could be revived; thus each work supplements and complements the other.

The *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh* is divided into three volumes. The first volume deals with the history of Muslim rulers to Humayun; the second gives the history of the reign of Akbar; and the third contains biographical notes of 'ulama, sufis, physicians, and poets who lived in Akbar's reign.

In his preface he states that his account of the early Muslim rulers is based on the *Tarikh i-Mubarak Shahi* and the *Nizamu't Tawarikh* or the *Tabaqat i-Akbari* and that he has occasionally added something of his own to the work. Although his political history of the Delhi Sultans does not give much new information, his presentation of material and his private comments and sneers are very valuable. So are the chronograms composed by contemporary poets. The biographies of poets who flourished in different reigns and selections of their verses enhance the importance of his work. He did not possess the complete works of these poets, but like other scholars interested in poetry he kept notebooks in which he entered any verses he came across that pleased him. With the aid of these, he intended to write a separate biographical dictionary of poets: but 'Ala'u'd Daula Qazwini forestalled him with his *Nafa'isu'l Ma'asir*. Badauni accordingly made, and acknowledged, large excerpts from this work, which formed the basis of the account of the poets in the third volume of his *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh*. The excerpts in the first volume are, however, all his own.

Although the monument of his fame in the history of Akbar in the second volume, the projected image of Akbar's age cannot be fully seen without the biographies in the third. His political history of Akbar, as he himself admits, is based on the *Tabaqat i-Akbari* but he is superior to Nizam ud-Din in his evaluation of men's characters, and in describing the impact of Akbar's style of government upon the Sunnis, hitherto the custodians of the administration and the main operators behind the scenes of politics. Thus the value of Badauni's original work can better be understood by dividing the subject into two heads:

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[1] *MT*, III, pp. 393-94; Haig, pp. 529-30.

1. Evaluation of personalities and politics,
2. Impact of Akbar's administration upon people in general and Sunnis in particular.

Badauni himself claims that his judgment of personalities is influenced by their attitude to orthodox Sunnism, and their firmness in the Sunni faith; but an examination of his assessment indicates that the principal categories of his thought were subjective. To him Akbar was an excellent judge of merits, inquisitive after the truth; but the factors that made him appear a heretic, an atheist, or a founder of a new faith, which Badauni nowhere specifically defines, were varied and many. At the top of Badauni's list of the causes of Akbar's fall from grace was his illiteracy and his poor grounding in the minutiae of Sunni orthodoxy. Badauni would have us think, that as a result his ambition knew no bounds and he came to entertain the idea of combining the powers of religion and state in his own person. Then, as a young man, his mind was further contaminated by the un-Islamised daughters of the Hindu rajas in his seraglio and his Hindu courtiers and friends; Raja Bir Bal, one of Akbar's most intimate associates, he sometimes calls 'bastard' and sometimes 'hellish dog' and he calls down curses on the whole Hindu faith. The next evil influence was the Shi'is, prominent among whom was Mulla Muhammad of Yazd. Here, however generalisations offered by himself, and such modern scholars as Professor Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, fail.[1] While Sunnis like

[1] "There is little doubt that Akbar's policy was not based upon favouring any particular sect; a good deal of what he did was repugnant to the Shi'is and the Sunnis alike; yet it was only the Sunnis who resented the monarch's lapse from the teachings of Islam. It was they who foresaw the disastrous effects of Akbar's heteorodoxy; it was they who struggled against it "(*The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent*, p. 162). Dr. Qureshi here forgets the role of Mulla Yazdi, and seems to remember only Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi, who battled against both the Shi'is and the Hindus, but could not even do this until after the death of Akbar. Had the Emperor hired as long as Aurangzeb did, this campaign might never have begun.

Badauni, were leaving no stone unturned after 1579 in their scramble for Akbar's favour and patronage, Mulla Muhammad Yazdi was the spearhead of the movement against Akbar's alleged heterodoxy, Badauni, out of contempt for Shi'is, gives no credit to Yazdi and contemptuously styles him[1] Yazidi, as if to connect him with Yazid I (680-83), the second 'Umaiyad Caliph, whose memory is execrated by Shi'is as the slayer of their Imam Husain and his followers in 680 AD.

Akbar's interest in Christians and Zoroastrians incurs Badauni's invective, and his description of the new Mughal elite is full of abusive language. He spares none who supported Akbar, and none from whose writings they derived support. The sufis of Ibn 'Arabi's schools, the peripatetics of the school of Avicenna, and the *ishraqi* theosophists are condemned as severely as the Emperor himself. Badauni's old class fellows Ab'ul Fazl and Faizi are smothered in imprecations; their father Shaikh Mubarak, Badauni's former teacher, escapes the worst, and is even accorded a measure of praise for his abilities; however he is accused of worldliness, impiety, deceit and hypocrisy, and is summed up thus:

> "In short, the saying of the common people, that the son brings curses on his father, is exemplified in his case, just as it happened in the case of Yazid, in respect of whom some impudently and presumptuously say, 'Curse be on Yazid and on his father.'[2]

In similar strain he condemns the family and disciples of Shaikh Salim Chishti. He tells of the coming of the leaders of several Islamic movements to India, but of their beliefs we learn nothing; we hear instead abuse, curses and angry words.

The way he denounces everything that happened in Akbar's reign after 1579 gives us the impression that a government dominated by orthodox Sunnis might have satisfied him; but his unflattering description of the Sunni personalities eminent in the early years of Akbar's reign, which shows that they did not reach Badauni's standard of Sunni piety, invite us to assume that not even a government of the most pious *mullas* would earn his approbation—unless perhaps, he had a predominant place in it.

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[1] *Supra.*

[2] *MT*, III, p. 75; Haig, p. 120.

While speaking of Shaikh Gada'i, he alleges that jealousy, hypocrisy and envy have been innate traits of the character of all Indian Muslims of religious pretensions. They purvey piety like shop keepers,[1] he says; and he constantly recurs to the metaphor of a shop in outlining and condemning their attitude. We are silently invited to assume that he, like the pharisee, was not as they. Describing Qazi Tawa'isi, he approvingly quotes Abu'l Fazl that had the great Imam Abu Hanifa lived in their times he would have written an altogether different code of jurisprudence.[2]

Although he is satisfied with no religious dignitary of Akbar's early years, the regent Bairam Khan enjoys his favours. He eulogises his religiosity[3] and his faith in sufis but he lets no occasion slip of denouncing Bairam's *sadru's-sudur,* Shaikh Gada'i Kamboh. He presents the popular discontent with Shaikh Gada'i's administration in a tendentious style,[4] he scarcely bothers to conceal his sympathy with the Afghan *madad i-ma'ash* holders, whose displacement and reduction to impotence was a vital necessity for the newly established Mughal state.[5] No wonder that when in 1588-89 the news of Shaikh Gada'i's death reached him, Badauni, calling him a dismissed *shahna*, (prefect) offers the following chronogram:

"You are dead, you great hog"[6]

Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi's management of *madad i-ma'ash* grants earns, perhaps deservingly, his contempt, but no scheme of reform satisfies him. He condemns Qazi 'Ali Baghdadi who in 1578-79 was appointed to enquire into allegations against Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi, calling him, apparently on this ground alone, an enemy of religious people.[7] In the same year, Akbar took the enquiries into his own hands and had all *farmans* of grant examined by his *mustaufis*,[1] mostly Hindus.[2] Badauni professes to regard this measure as the last nail in the coffin of the pious men, and a proof that nothing remains for Sunnis but tragedy and gloom.

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[1] *Ibid*, II, pp. 29, 34; Lowe, pp. 22, 28; Also note similar remarks in the biographical note on Shaikh Hasan of Ajmer (*MT*, III, p. 87; Haig, pp. 136-37), and in that on Shaikh Ziya'u'llah (*MT*, III, p. 125; Haig, pp. 181-82).

[2] *MT*, III, pp. 78-79; Haig, p. 125.

[3] *MT*, II, pp. 46-47; Lowe, pp. 41-42.

[4] *Ibid*, II, pp. 29-31, 34, 37, 39; *Ibid*, pp. 22-24, 28, 31, 33.

[5] *Ibid*, II, p. 29; *Ibid*, pp. 22-23.

[6] *Ibid*, II, p. 119; *Ibid*, p. 124. Badauni's abusive remarks are responsible for the view, generally held, that the Shaikh was a Shi'i; for Badauni to abuse a Sunni is imagined to be preposterous.

[7] *Ibid*, II, p. 274; *Ibid*, p. 282.

Until Shaikh 'Abdu'n-Nabi and Makhdumu'l Mulk fell; Badauni portrays them as mean, hypocritical, cruel and illiterate, but after their fall he finds himself in sympathy with them. His account of the role of the 'ulama in the rebellions in 1580-81 proves quite plainly that the Emperor acted on political grounds alone; yet he alleges that Akbar's main motive was to overthrow Islam.

Like Mushtaqi, he is fond of telling queer love stories but their heroes are people who came into his own life; the great nobles, Shaikhs and Saiyids. He does not conceal his own affairs, whether with girls or boys; yet he waxes eloquent in indignant denunciation of the scandalous affairs of others. The major portion of the account of 1558-59 deals with the story of the Khan-i-Zaman's infatuation for Shahim Beg; he interprets Khan i-Zaman's vagaries as the way of life of the Transoxians.[3] He finds cause for shock too in connection with Akbar's efforts to establish matrimonial alliances with old Muslim families of Delhi.[4] The love-affair of Musa, a Saiyid in the imperial service, with the gold-smith's daughter Mohini reads like the romance of Romeo and Juliet, and covers almost the entire history of 1568-69.[5] The account is based on a *masnawi* written by Musa's brother Shah. The end of the tale is marked by Badauni's satisfaction at Mohini's acceptance of Islam.[6]

The history of 1568 ends with a similar story. Its hero is a relation of Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus; the celebrated Shattari saint. A dispute over the question of the lover's burial is the climax of the story. Shaikh Ziya'ud Din, the son of Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus, claims that his relation was a martyr to love but Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and the 'alims and *qazis* of his faction urge that he died unclean and adulterous. Badauni sympathises with the lover.[1]

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[1] Mustaufis or auditors belonged to the *Diwan's* department.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 279; Lowe, p. 287.

[3] *Ibid*, II, pp. 20-22; *Ibid*, pp. 13-15.

[4] *Ibid*, II, pp. 61-62; *Ibid*, pp. 59-61.

[5] *Ibid*, II, pp. 110-17; *Ibid*, pp. 113-20.

[6] *Ibid*, II, p. 117; *Ibid*, pp. 120-21.

The description of Akbar's religious innovations begins with the year 1578-79, and the greatest number of innovatory ordinances are ascribed to 990/1582-83. In the course of his account of the year 1579 he admits that it is impossible to describe all the details of different events chronologically,[2] so he gives only brief notices. Under 990/1582-83 he again concludes with apologies for not strictly following the chronological sequence of events.[3] Several new regulations are mentioned under different years but the rules which he considered un-Islamic are repeatedly mentioned and mixed up with provisions which even he seems to admit are purely administrative.[4] Grief at the "demise of Islam" in Akbar's court, he says, is his motive in recording these innovations. The principal basis of Akbar's regulations, he states, is the idea that every un-Islamic ordinance is valid and acceptable, while Islamic principles are unreasonable, casual and irrational, the inventions of 'the miserable scoundrels of Arabia.' The following two verses of Firdausi, he asserts, were frequently recited at the Court:

Through the eating of the milk of camels and lizards,
The Arabs have made such progress,
That they now wish to get hold of the kingdom of Persia,
Fie upon Fate! Fie upon Fate.[5]

To Badauni the introduction of Iranian culture amounted to a complete rejection of Islam and Sunnism. The solar months of Iran and the Ilahi era were introduced to meet the need of the cultivator and the Mughal revenue administration, for a fixed solar calender; but Badauni ascribes it to hatred for Islam. The increasing patronage of Persian literature, and emphasis on the study of astronomy, mathematics, medicine, other sciences and philosophy served cultural as well as practical needs; but Badauni sees it as the abolition of Arabic and religious studies.[1]

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 119; Lowe, p. 123.

[2] *Ibid*, II, p. 264; *Ibid*, p. 272.

[3] *Ibid*, II, p. 321; *Ibid*, p. 331.

[4] Tora i-Chingizi (*MT*, p. 5); weighing ceremony, p. 8; sanctitiy of cow, p. 261; worship of fire and sun, p. 261, Rakhi, p. 261, Un-Islamic laws, p. 262, charities, p. 269, *kalima*, p. 273; the millenium, pp. 301, 317, *sijda*, p. 301; liquor, pp. 301-02; pork, p. 302, beards, p. 303; Christian bells, p. 304, boars and dogs in palace, p. 305, marriages with cousins, p. 306; age of marriage, p. 306, gold and silk, p. 306, abolition of hijri dates, p. 306, Persian letters, p. 307, Islam ridiculed, p. 307, Abolition of congregational prayers, p. 314, Names such as Ahmad and Muhammad changed, p. 314, criticism of mircales, p. 316, Nauruz, pp. 321, 342, 352, killing of animals on Sundays forbidden, p. 322, Akbar's intention to give up meat, p. 322, mosques changed into guardhouses, p. 322; monogamy, widow-remarriage, prohibition of *sati*, circumcision, taking meals with butchers, p. 356, Brahmans to decide disputes among Hindus, p. 356, *Shari'at i-Jadid*, p. 388, duties of kotwal, p. 390, control over expenditure, p. 390, fixation of prices, p. 390.

[5] *MT*, II, p. 307; Lowe, p. 317.

One of his statements shows that until 990/1582 the congregational prayers were still held at Court; and the *azan* was called;[2] but at some later, unspecified date it was abolished. Then, speaking of Shaikh Musa and son of Shaikh Hamid Qadiri, he says:

> "He would, at the stated times for prayer, whether he were in the public or the private hall of audience, himself utter the call to prayer, and would then lead the congregational prayers in the presence of the *khalifah* of the age, and none could gainsay him."[3]

Writing of Hakim Misri, he says that Akbar built a dais in the courtyard of his Lahore palace and ordered that those who wished might perform prayers there in his presence. Both these instances suggest, that the abolition of public prayers was not so absolute as Badauni had inferred; but Hakim Misri, like Badauni, found an occasion to sneer and wrote:

> "Our king has founded a mosque,
> O ye faithful, good fortune may it bring!
> It is good policy in this mosque,
> For him to count those who perform prayers!"[4]

The celebration of the *nauruz* [5] festival in India is the legacy of the Delhi Sultans; Balban and most others celebrated it;[6] to Badauni, it amounted to the acceptance of Shi'ism and Zoroastrianism at the expense of Muslim festivals. The observance of

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 261-62; Lowe, pp. 268-69.

[2] *Ibid*, II, p. 306; *Ibid*, p. 316.

[3] *Ibid*, III, p. 92; *Ibid* p. 142.

[4] *Ibid*, III, p. 166; *Ibid*, p. 231.

[5] The first day of the Persian solar year, when the sun entered the Zodiacal sign of Aries. In Persia it was the time of harvest and marked the first day of the realization of land revenue.

[6] Kaiqubad also celebrated it. Amir Khusrau, *Qiranu's Sy'dain* (Aligarh, 1918), pp. 67-77.

Hindu festivals, such as *rakhi*,[1] is likewise condemned. The *sijdah* (prostration), for which the term *zaminbos* (kissing the ground) was coined; was enforced in the reign of Balban[2] and endured even in the courts of the Afghans.[3] Badauni himself performed it voluntarily, but in his history he claims that the practice was invented to invest Akbar with a divine status.

Badauni makes no distinction between Akbar's own beliefs and sayings, and his legislation for the entire empire. Akbar's own argument suggests that he discouraged the use of names like Ahmad, or Muhammad and Mustafa out of respect to the Prophet.[4] He always called Prince Salim Shaikhu,[5] out of respect for the great saint whose name he bore; Badauni, however suggests, that Hindu noblemen and the daughters of the rajas had influenced him to do so out of spite against Islam. He adds that in due course the names of the courtiers were changed from Yar Muhammad and Muhammad Khan to Rahmat. However, it gives him satisfaction too, for he says:

> "To call such miserable wretches by the name of our beloved Prophet would indeed be unfortunate. The proverb is that, 'It is wrong to put a collar of precious jewels round the neck of a wretched pig."[6]

Again Badauni leaves his readers confused by not distinguishing provisions meant for the Emperor's *murids* and those made for general compliance. Such regulations as circumcision at puberty, were not without arguments in their favour, but unscientific. Badauni finds no use for enactments encouraging monogamy, discouraging early marriages, and preventing marriages between cousins.[7] He perversely considers them to have emerged from wilful defiance of Islamic traditions and law. Although Islam permits widows to marry and the Prophet Muhammad had himself married widows, Badauni does not fail to frown at Akbar's encouragement to the practice.[1] The rules to control prostitution[2] and the sale of liquor[3] are so interpreted as to make them appear to give a free rein to drinking and debauchery. And Badauni adds, absurdly enough:

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 261. "It became the current custom also to wear the *rakhi* on the wrist, which means an amulet formed out of twisted linen rags" (Lowe, p. 269).

[2] Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 31.

[3] *MT*, I, p. 325. In Islam Shah's reign, the noblemen were required to show respect to his shoes.

[4] *A'in*, III, p. 186, no. 142; Jarrett, III, p. 441.

[5] *Tuzuk*, p. 1.

[6] *MT*, II, p. 314.

[7] *Ibid*, II, p. 356.

> "They say, moreover, that swines' flesh formed a component part of that wine, but God knows!"[4]

Badauni is too careful to commit himself to the truth of this ludicrous allegation.

The duties of the *kotwal* (city prefect) demanded careful surveillance of every class of people. Akbar's rules in this connection are described in detail under the year 1002/1593-94. Many of these provisions would do credit to any government but to Badauni they are intended only to undermine Islam.[5] He closes his account of this year with a description of the main heads of the new financial and political laws, recommending readers to consult the *Akbar Nama* (the *A'in i-Akbari*) of Abu'l Fazl.[6]

In course of his narrative he gives great emphasis to the unsuccessful aspect of Akbar's legislation. Although exaggerated, his remarks present the other side of the medal. Describing the failure of the *karori*[7] experiment of 1575, for example, he takes sides both with the *karoris* and the cultivators. The rapacity of the *karoris*, he says, ruined the cultivators; yet sympathising with the *karoris*, he remarks:

> "But the *karoris* were brought to account by Raja Todar Mal, and many good men died from the severe beatings which were administered, and from the tortures of the rack and pincers. So many died from protracted confinement in the prison of the revenue authorities, that there was no need of the executioner or swordsman, and no one cared to find them graves or

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 356.

[2] *Ibid*, II, pp. 302-03.

[3] *Ibid* II, pp. 301-02.

[4] *Ibid*, II, p. 302.

[5] *Ibid*, II, p. 390. The transfer to the kotwal of duties earlier performed by *muhtasibs*, who were invariably Muslim, seems to be the principal reason for Badauni's dissatisfaction with the new arrangement. A kotwal could be of any religion, and any caste.

[6] *MT*, II, p. 392.

[7] In the 19th regnal year (1574-75) the whole land was divided into districts, each of which was expected to yield one karor of tankas. To each district was appointed an *amil* or *'amalguzar*, who came to be known as *karori* (*The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, p. 275). According to 'Arif, the new measures were introduced to promote cultivation, and among other reforms included the consolidation of holdings *chak*) 'Arif, p. 197.

grave-clothes."[1]

The exact number of *karoris* was 182 and the system was designed to stop embezzlement and fraud. Badauni gives no indication of the role of the vested interests responsible for the failur of the system; his picture shows only that the experiment lefe behind it a trail of misery and suffering, without admitting that some *karoris* might have been honest and efficient.

His account of *mansabdari* too suggests that the system was a total failure; low tradesmen, weavers, cotton cleaners, carpenters and green grocers, both Hindus and Muslims, none with any ability or equipment became *mansabdars*.[2] The loser under the *dagh* reform of 1574-75, which made the Mughal army most efficient, was, he says, the common soldier "into whose cup dirt fell."[3] The introduction of branding, according to him broke the neck of the soldier. In order to make his case against Akbar's reforms complete, he adds that all his conquests were the result of his good luck,[4] confirming Abu'l Fazl in an indirect manner.

All those who oppose Akbar's administrative reforms are Badauni's heroes; all who support Akbar, Badauni forsakes. Mirza 'Aziz Koka is a typical case. No wonder that both the *mansabdars* and the *mansabdari* system, which provided Akbar with a solid administrative framework steeped in the new ideology, should appear to Badauni as a conspiracy against Islam. Gibing at the system, he loved to call himself a *hazari*;[5] because he had held 1000 *bigdas* in *madad i-ma'ash.*

Badauni's technique is very successful for the kind of impression he seeks to create. He does not enter into details; he selects a few episodes and ordinances, strings them together, and by a few strokes of his pen here and a few there he creates a most lively and interesting picture of his own view of events, which leaves an indelible mark upon the mind of his readers. No readers can avoid some degree of fellow-feeling with the poor slighted old Mulla, whose sneers tell us more than his plain descriptions and whose mastery of concise, uncomplicated, and terse Persian cannot fail to earn the sympathy, and even the affection of any reader.

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 189; Lowe, p. 183.

[2] *MT*, II, pp. 190-91; Lowe, pp. 193-94. His concluding remarks are very interesting. He writes, "But notwithstanding all this His Majesty's good luck overcame all enemies, so that large numbers of soldiers were not necessary, and the *amirs* had no longer to suffer from the inconvenient reluctance of their followers".

[3] *MT*, II, p. 191.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid*, II, p. 342; Lowe, p. 353.

The *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh* closes with a mention of Safar 1004/ October 1595. The last detailed entry describes the death of Badauni's well wisher and benefactor Faizi in language neither charitable nor becoming,[1] and notes the death of Hakim Humam and Kamala i-Sadr in passing. The following sentence is the drop scene of the drama:

> "The belongings of both of these were at once (confiscated and) locked up in chambers, so that their dead bodies had to depend upon the funds of others for shrouds."[2]

We do not know whether Badauni added any more, or even that he lived much longer; nor is there any evidence that his history came to the notice of Akbar; although Badauni's close friends must surely have been aware of it.

According to Khafi Khan, Jahangir came to know of the book's existence; although Badauni's sons denied responsibility for it, or even knowledge of it, they were imprisoned and their property confiscated; book sellers were forbidden to sell or purchase the book, which it continued to circulate clandestinely. Khafi Khan found the work incredible and even "one-hundredth part of it" disrespectful to Akbar's memory.[3]

Zikru'l Muluk

On the model of the *Tabaqat i-Akbari*, Shaikh 'Abdu'l-Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi (1551-1642), a nephew of Shaikh Rizqu'llah Mushtaqi wrote the *Zikru'l Muluk*, or *Tarikh i-Haqqi*. The work was compiled in the 40th year of Akbar's reign (1595-96). From the establishment of Islamic rule in India to the reign of the Lodis, it is based on the *Tabaqat i-Nasiri*, the *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi* and the *Tarikh i-Bahadur Shahi*. The account of Lodis has been drawn from the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi*. The account of Akbar's reign is very brief.

The Shaikh says that not even many volumes would suffice for a

[1] *MT*, II, pp. 406-07; Lowe, pp. 420-21.

[2] *Ibid*.

This is an example of the dark side of the Mughal escheat system.

[3] Khafi Khan, *Muntakhabu'l Lubab*, I (Calcutta, 1860-74), pp. 197-98.

full description of the conquests and the administrative regulation of Akbar's reign but if he survives, he will, with God's help, devote his attention to that task. Although he survived until 1642, the divine assistance seems to have been reserved to aid him in the writing of the works of *hadis* for which he is so famous, and in the propagation of Sunni orthodoxy; no continuation of the *Zikru'l Muluk* was undertaken. It seems that the publication of the *Akbar Nama* and the *Tabaqat i-Akbari* turned him away from his purpose; the *Muntakhabu't-Tawarikh* of his friend Badauni, which he must have known, might well have appeared to him to say all that needed saying. In the *Zikru'l Muluk* he prays God that Akbar may establish the Islamic shari'a firmly and permanently. The work has no independent value; the only fact worth remembering is that an outstanding 'alim entertained a pious wish to write the history of Akbar's reign.

Akbar Nama and Zubdatu't Tawarikh

At the end of Akbar's reign there appeared the *Akbar Nama* of Shaikh Ilahdad Faizi Sihrindi, and the *Zubdatu't Tawarikh* of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq's son Shaikh Nuru'l Haq. The *Akbar Nama* ends with Akbar's return from the Deccan in 1601 but the *Zubdatu't Tawarikh*, finished in 1606, continues beyond Akbar's death to the first year of Jahangir's reign. Both works were written under the patronage of Shaikh Farid Bukhari (*c.* 1545-1616) who wished Akbar's history so written that the achievements of himself and other Bukhari Saiyids would be immortalised.

Both authors were great 'alims, and their outlook upon life was similar to Mushtaqi's. Both reckon the *Waqi'at i-Mushtaqi* as an important history and both share Mushtaqis fondness for love stories, claiming to find, like Mushtaqi, Badauni and all sufis, a road through earthly love to divine love. Muslim youths of sufi temperament and Hindu girls who invariably embrace Islam before death are the heroes and heroines of these stories.

To both writers, their patron exemplified all that was good to Islamic values in contemporary India. Born of a high family of Saiyids, he is prodigal and munificent to all holy men and Saiyids and invincible in battle.

Faizi Sihrindi and Nuru'l Haq ascribe the rebellion of the Eastern provinces in 1580-81 to the high handed conduct of the officers of the *diwani* and the indiscreet and tactless way in which the governors pressed forward the much disliked branding regulations. They eulogise the services performed by Shaikh Farid in collaboration with Raja Todar Mal in putting down the rebellion, in which the disgruntled 'ulama too had had a hand. Both works givea detailed account of Shaikh Farid's expedition to the Siwalik hills in 1593-94 and his success in the implementation of Akbar's policy of forcing the hill rajas to accept the Mughal paramountcy. Their account of Shaikh Farid's role in the conquest of Asir in 1600 gives important glimpses of Akbar's policy of the annexation of the Deccan sultanate and an authentic account of the capture of Asirgarh.

Both consider Akbar's efforts to understand religions genuinely serious, and raise no note of bitterness in mentioning the presence of non-Sunni elements at Court. Neither sees anything unusual in the Emperor's decision, in 1579, to recite the *khutbah* himself; nor do they give the remotest hint that Sunnis were persecuted. After all, their hero, a most outstanding supporter of Akbar's policies, was, in their judgment a pious Sunni. They are proud of Akbar's conquests, and find them a significant achievement forIslam, taking up the same strain as 'Arif Qandahari. Under the year 1593, Shaikh Nuru'l Haq describes Mirza 'Aziz Koka's conquests in Gujarat and Kathiawar, and adds that by conquering up to the territories of Somnath, he damaged the foundations of *kufr* and renewed Islamic practices.

The history of Faizi Sihrindi give no inconsiderable space to the description of his father's and his own importance as an 'alim. The injection of his private history by Faizi illuminates several controversial questions in the grant of *madad i-ma'ash.* He says that in 1575-76, when Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and Makhdumu'l Mulk were disputing the proper mode of cutting the throat of a deer seized by the neck by a tiger, his father died, leaving 1000 *bighas* of land he had held. Faizi wrote a treatise entitled *Saidiya Akbariya* in which he collected all the rulings on the above controversy, presented the work to Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and had the grant confirmed.[1] In connection with Akbar's expedition against Mirza Hakim, he says that while marching through the Punjab Akbar made personal investigations into allegations against Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi's awards of *madad i-ma'ash* and that Akbar satisfied himself from a number of sources, including the

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[1] Faizi Sihrindi, f. 121a.

muqaddam (headman) of the village, that this large grant was rightly confirmed upon Faizi.[1]

Nuru'l-Haq generally summarises from Faizi. His account of Akbar's death is a very important contribution to the source material of that period. He says that physicians were divided over Akbar's treatment. The Emperor authorised Hakim 'Ali to do what he thought best. Describing, the confusion among the nobles about Akbar's successor he states that Shaikh Farid Bukhari's "lofty thought had always been devoted to the appreciation of truth and the expression of goodwill towards every Muslim; he therefore decided that nothing should shake the pillars of state; that bloodshed must be avoided, and justice be done." It was with these motives that with 500 Saiyids under him, he marched out of Agra fort to Prince Salim; his opponents, although overwhelming in number did not molest him. To Prince Salim, "heir apparent to the Caliphate" entitled do succeed his father, "both because of his innate abilities and in pursuance of the laws of inheritance" he offered congratulations on his imminent accession, and his allegiance.[2] He disinterestedly refrained from seeking to impose any conditions upon his support, or extorting any pledge of favour; this is in opposition to the view, originating with the Jesuits and amplified by their modern commentator Payne, that Shaikh Farid supported the Prince on the condition that he would restore Islamic orthodoxy.[3] The situation warranted no such step.

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[1] Faizi Sihrindi, ff. 128b-129a.

[2] *Zubatu't Tawraikh*, f. 201a.

[3] For a discussion of the controversy see *MRM*, pp.217-22.

Professor Nizami thinks that "If the letters of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shaikh Abdul Haqq are read in the light of these observations of the Jesuit Fathers, the background clears up and one is constrained to conclude that

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and others of his school of thought and (sic) played some part in the accession of Jahangir". K. A. Nizami, Naqshbandi Influence on Mughal Rulers and Politics in *Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth International Congress of Orientalists*, New Delhi, January 4-10, 1964 (Poona, 1970), p. 315.

But the mere fact that these two Shaikhs wrote to some nobles after Jahangir's accession cannot prove that they sought to bring Jahangir to the throne. Rather did the two men turn what had happened without reference to them to their own advantage, and to the glorification of Sunni orthodoxy. They sought recognition from the dominant forces newly emerged; they did not claim credit for having helped them acquire their dominance. In fact, it is likely that the orthodox would have found the youthful Khusrau readier to bend himself to their views than the mature Jahangir, whose grounding in liberal principles had been both early and thorough.

Professor Nizami refers to a letter written to Jahangir six months before his accession by Shaikh Husain Jami, who after predicting that he would rule asks him to "release" when king, "a person connected with the Naqshbandi silsilah". "This is a significant piece of information", concludes Professor Nizami, and from his laconic remark one is invited to infer the direct influence of the Naqshbandi order upon the Emperor. The actual words of Jahangir are, however:

"Six months before my accession, Shaikh Husain Jami wrote to me from Lahore. He is a disciple of the mystics (derveshes) of Shiraz, and is nowadays seated on the cushion of dervishhood (means to say that he is an eminent dervish). He said that he had dreamed that the saints and principal mystics (*auliya'wa buzurgan*) had entrusted the governance of the realm to that choicest member of God's court (sc; himself). I should rejöice in this good news, and await the event. He hoped that after it had happened I would pardon the faults of Khwaja, Zakariya, a member of the Ahrari order." (*Tuzuk*, p. 13).

Ahraris belonged to the Naqshbandi order of Khwaja 'Ubaidu'llah Ahrar. This passage proves merely that a particular saint had the wit to salute the rising sun and ask a favour for a colleague; the text cannot be confidently asserted to mean that Khwaja Zakariya was in prison. The compliment, "when you grow great, remember me or be good to holy men" is found in all ages, and is a thin stuff to weave into a pattern of active promotion of the recipient's future greatness.

Not only that; Jahangir did remember Khwaja Jami, and on coming to the throne gave rich gifts to him and his disciples. (*R* & *B*, I, pp. 46, 72). Had Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi or Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq paid him similar compliments while Akbar still ruled, would he not have rewarded them also; Would they not have approached him direct instead of writing letters to his favourites. No Naqshbandi source mentions Shaikh Husain Jami's contacts with Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi, and it is not likely that this Irani saint had any connection with the Naqshbandis of Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi's "school of thought".

CHAPTER 8

INSHA (EPISTOLOGRAPHY) IN AKBAR'S REIGN

Abu'l Fazl's *Akbar Nama* and the *A'in i-Akbari* gave a new lead to the Mughal historians although none could equal his style. His influence was most tangible in the field of *Insha* (epistolography) where it relegated the earlier norms and standards of Persian epistolography to the background, and was recognised as the epitome of the new intellectual and religious climate of Akbar's reign.

The earlier model for Persian epistolography had been set by Abu'l Fazl Baihaqi (d. 470/1077), the historian of the Ghaznavids (977-1190) who was also the author of a work on the secretary's craft, entitled the *Zinat ul-Kuttab*.[1] The chancelleries of the Ghaznavids and the great Seljuqs (1038-1157) imitated the style of Baihaqi and perfected epistolography as a branch of literature in its own right. The letters and documents written by Muntajabu'd Din Badi'al-Katib al-Juvayni, the secretary of the Saljuq Sultan Sanjar, (1118-57) added new lustre to the glories of his master.[2]

Thirteenth-century India generally followed the style of Bahau'd Din Baghdadi, Rashidu'd Din Watwat, and Mu'in 'Asim.[3] Watwat; (d. 1182-83) who flourished in the court of the Khwarazm Shahs (1077-1277), was an eminent poet and prose-writer. His *Hada'iqu's Sihr* or "Garden of Magic" is a standard manual on rhetoric and poetry.[4] The letters written by Bahau'd Din Baghdadi between 1182 and 1184 were collected in a book entitled *At-Tawassul ila't-tarassul*, (Introduction to the Art of

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[1] Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, 1968), pp. 433-34.

[2] M. Qazwini, *Majmu'a i-Munshat i-Muntajabu'd Din Yadnama i-dinshah i-Irani* (Tehran, 1943), pp. 1-16.

[3] Barani, p. 169.

[4] Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, II (Cambridge, 1964, reprint), pp. 330-33.

Letter-Writing).[1]

Barani thinks that Malik Qiwamu'd-Din Dabir of Balban's court excelled the master-stylists of the court of the Khwarazm Shahs.[2] His once famous *Fath Nama* (Letter proclaiming victory) announcing Balban's victory over Lakhnauti, has not survived, nor has anything else written by him; but the *Fath Nama* written by the young Amir Khusrau on the same occasion is preserved in the '*Ijaz i-Khusrawi*[3] and indicates that Muslim scholars under the Delhi Sultans followed a literary model no different from the standard of the Ghaznavid court. The *Fath Namas* and the official correspondence of the court of the Sultans of Delhi were intended to proclaim the victory of the rightly-guided faith (*din i-huda*) over the wicked infidels (*kuffar i-nabkar*). Even if wars were waged against Muslim rivals the standard political vacabulary did not change.

The scope of the surviving letters of Rashidu'd Din Fazlu'llah is very wide;[4] they even offer glimpses of the agrarian conditions of contemporary Iran. However, his diplomatic and official correspondence made no departures from the beaten path. From the middle of the fourteenth century the main guide book for secretaries of the Mongol courts was the *Dasturu'l-Katib fi ta 'yini-lmaratib* (A Canon for the Clerk on the Appointing of Ranksu) by Muhammad bin Hindushah Nakhjuvani. The outstanding epistolographers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were scholars, historians, holy men and diplomats. Among them were personalities such as Nuru'd Din 'Abdu'r Rahman Jami, Sharafu'd Din 'Ali Yazdi, Husain Wa'iz Kashifi and 'Abdu'llah bin Muhammad Marwarid but at the Court of Humayun the most popular style was that of the Nama i-Nami of the renowned historian, Khwandamir.[5] Maulana Yusufi, Humayun's secretary, was another master stylist and his *Badi'ul Insha* (Epistolary Rarities) was also widely read.[6]

The *Fath Namas* and other official documents written in the first half of Akbar's reign are included in the *Munshat i-Namkin*, (Witty Writings)[1] in the form of copies of the original documents, but without the names of the addressees, intended to serve only as precedents. The *Fath Namas* play upon the Quranic verse, 'Surely we have granted thee a victory";[2] other documents extol 'the *shari'a*-adorning judgment of the Emperor.'[3]

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[1] *History of Iranian Literature*, p. 434.

[2] Barani, p. 169.

[3] They ruled from 1077 to 1231.

[4] Amir Khusrau, *I'jaz i-Khusrawi*, IV, completed in 719-1319 (Lucknow, 1876), pp. 4-13.

[5] It was commenced in 1520 and contains a letter dated 929/1523. It gives specimens of letters to a wide cross-section of the elite. (Ethe, 2055).

[6] Ethe, 2057.

The style developed by eminent secretaries to various sultans between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries demanded a perfect control over the language and ability to write florid and ornate prose. The secretaries expended all their energy on the refinement of tedious redundance and rhetorical exuberance; no need was felt to change the standard vocabulary, which was intended to advertise the idea that only Sunni rulers were destined to triumph.

Akbar's new political and administrative policies called for a new style. In 1579 Akbar seems to have ordered that Shaikh Abu'l Fazl and Hakim Abu'l Fath should henceforth draft all important letters and decrees. Often both were ordered to prepare drafts independently, and Akbar used to select one or the other; sometimes a new draft was prepared by combining the two. One such incident is recorded by Hakim Abu'l Fath in a letter to his brother, Hakim Humam. In August 1581, Mirza Muhammad Hakim fled from Kabul; Akbar ordered both Abu'l Fazl and Abu'l Fath to write *farmans* on the matter to certain officers. He approved the draft of Abu'l Fath but ordered the incorporation in it of points which had been better expressed by Abu'l Fazl.[4]

Although no draft of these two letters is extant, letters no. 2 and 3 in the *Mukatabat i-'Allami* demonstrate the case in point. They are addressed to 'Abdullah Khan Uzbeg of Turan, and are so nearly identical that 'Abdu's Samad Afzal Muhammad, Abu'l Fazl's nephew, who compiled the *Mukatabat i-Allami*, took both of them to be of Abu'l Fazl's drafting. Beveridge considered them "the drafts of one and the same original." The draft of the letter actually sent to 'Abdullah Khan Uzbeg in August

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[1] Ethe, 2064; Aligarh University Ms. The work was completed in 1598 by Abu'l Qasim Khan Namkin (witty).

[2] *Munshat i-Namkin* (Aligarh), ff. 25b-27aa, 40b.

[3] *Ibid*, f. 15b.

[4] *Ruq'at i-Hakim Abu'l Fath Gilani* (Lahore, 1968), pp. 18-19.

1586 and delivered by Hakim Human and Mir Sadr i-Jahan Mufti is incorporated in the *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, Beveridge comments:

> "The beginning of the letter, which has just been translated, corresponds to the beginning of letter no. 3 of the *Maktubat* (*Mukatabat*), but the rest of it agrees with the second letter. The third is probably a rejected draft, it does not appear in the *Akbar Nama* except as to the beginning, and it contains a still more laboured defence against the charge of impiety."[1]

In fact letter no. 2 was drafted by Abu'l Fazl[2] and letter no. 3 by Abu'l Fath.[3] Akbar preferred the beginning portion of no. 3 and used it to replace Abu'l Fazl's beginning in no. 2; retaining the rest of Abu'l Fazl's draft intact.[4] Both versions are defensive and apologetic, but Abu'l Fazl's draft is more dignified, and better represents the new style of Mughal private and official correspondence. It relegated Hakim Abu'l Fath's style to the background; even the style developed by Faizi received no recognition; and posterity took Abu'l Fazl alone as its example. Collections of letters of Hakim Abu'l Fath and Faizi exist in manuscript in only a few libraries. The first edition of Abu'l Fath's letters was published only in June 1968 (by the Research Department of the Punjab University, Pakistan), while Faizi's extant letters, known as *Lata'if i-Faiyazi*, still remain unpublished. On the other hand, the publication of the *Mukatabat* began early in the nineteenth century, and, in keeping with the traditions of the educational curriculum of the Mughals, it was incorporated into the curriculum of young East India Company officials in training.

The letters of *Mukatabat i-'Allami*, the name its compiler 'Abdu's Samad gave the collection, were taken as a chronogram yield the date 1015/1606-07. The work is divided into three volumes. The first comprises the following Imperial *farmans* and documents:

1. To 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg, conveyed by the members of the Embassy sent in 1596.
2.-3. To 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg, delivered in 1586 by Hakim Human and Mir Sadr i-Jahan.
4. To Shah 'Abbas Safavi, delivered by ambassadors in 1594.

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[1] Bev, III, p. 761, n. 1.
[2] *MA*, pp. 11-17.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 17-26.
[4] *Ibid*, pp. 11-13.

5. To the ruler of Kashghar, sent after the annexation of Kashmir (1586).
6. To the Sherifs of Mecca, sent after August 1581.
7. To the Wise Men (Danayan) of Europe (identified by Maclagan as Philip II of Spain), dated March-April 1582.
8. To Prince Murad in 1589.
9. To 'Abdu'r Rahim Khan i-Khanan, informing him of the death of Raja Birbal, which took place in February 1586.
10. To 'Abdu'r Rahim Khan i-Khanan, about March 1586.
11. To Hakim Humam offering condolences on the death of Hakim Abu'l Fath (dated 28 Shauwal 997/9 September 1589).
12. To A'zam Khan Kukultash after his departure to Mecca in March 1593.
13. The Imperial *Dasturu'l 'Amal* (Manual of Administration).
14. To Shahbaz Khan Kamboh after his Malwa appointment in 1594.
15. *Farman* on the abolition of *zakat* (taxes), dated 990/1582-83.
16. To Raja 'Ali Khan of Khandesh: delivered by Faiz iin 1591.
17. To Burhan Nizamu'l Mulk, sent about 1591.
18. A letter inviting some learned men of Shiraz to Court.

The second volume comprises Abu'l Fazl's personal letters to the Emperor, princes and other dignitaries.

1-2	To Akbar.
3-5	To Prince Daniyal.
6	To Shah Rukh, the grandson of Sulaiman Mirza.
7-9	To Shaikh Mubarak.
10-48	To Khan i-Khanan.
49-51	To A'zam Khan (Khan i-A'zam Mirza 'Aziz Koka).
52-57	To Zain Khan Kukaltash.
50-61,63	To Faizi.
62,64-67	To Abu'l Khair.
68-70	To Qasim Khan Tabrizi, *diwan* to Shah Murad.
71-72	To Sadiq Khan.
73-74	To Ja'far Khan *diwan*, entitled Asaf Khan.
75	To Mirza Yazid Beg, the governor of *Bandar*, a port otherwise unspecified. (it is simply called "bandar," or port).
76	To Qutbu'l Mulk, ruler of Golkunda.

77-78	To Raja 'Ali Khan of Khandesh.
79	To Zaman Muhammad Qilich Khan.
80	To Mirza Yusuf Khan.
81	To Mirza 'Ali Beg Akbar Shahi.
82	To Shihabu'd Din Ahmad Khan.
83	To Khwaja Shamsu'd Din Khwafi.
84-85	To Raja Man Singh.
86	To Hakim 'Ainu'l Mulk.
87-89	To Hakim Humam.
90	To Qazi Hasan Qazwini.
91	To Husain Khan brother of Qazi Hasan.
92	To Shaikh Hasan 'Ali Mausili.
93-98,100.	To Mir Sharif Amuli.
99	To Mir Sharif Sarmadi
101	To Ziya'u'llah son of Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus.
102	To Sher Khwaja.
103-104	To Khizr Khan son of Raja 'Ali Khan Faruqi.
105	To one of the Khans of 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg.
106	To Mir Qiwamu'd Din Shiqdar.

The third volume comprises miscellaneous writings by Abu'l Fazl. These are generally short compositions consisting of prefaces, commentaries, and summaries of works studied by Abu'l Fazl from time to time. It begins with Abu'l Fazl's commentary on *Surah Fath*[1] of the Qur'an (Chapter relating to the Victory) and goes on to include Abu'l Fazl's comments on the *Sharh Adabu'l Muridin*[2] and the *Maktubat*[3] of Shaikh Sharafu'd Din Yahya Munyari, and on poetical works of eminent Persian poets such as Khaqani (1121-99), Anwari (1126-90), Zahir Faryabi (1156-1201), Sana'i (died 1130-31), Kamal Isma'il (1172-1237) and Jalalu'd Din Rumi (1207-73). Of the notes on prose works the most interesting are those on the *Ausaf al-Ashraf*[1] of Khwaja Nasiru'd-Din Tusi (1201-74) and on an anonymous collection of the sayings of the philosophers. This third volume also includes a detailed preface to an Imperial album, and concluding remarks on Abu'l Fazl's own translations of the *'Iyar i-Danish,*[2] *Akbar Nama* (all three volumes) and the *Markaz i-Adwar*[3] of Faizi.

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[1] *Supra.*

[2] The *Adabu'l Muridin* by Abu'l Najib Ziya'u'd Din 'Abdu'l Qahir al-Suhrawardi, an uncle of the founder of the Suhrawardi order, Shaikh Shihabu'd Din 'Umar al-Suhrawardi. The original Arabic is regarded as an authentic work on sufi doctrines and practices. It was translated by several Indian sufis, including Gisu Daraz ((Ethe, 1863) and Yahya Munyari.

[3] There are several collections of Yahya Munyari's letters. A collection of 100 letters, printed several times in India, was made by Zain Badr 'Arabi in 1346-47 (Ethe 1843). Another collection by the same Zain Badr, made in 1367-68, comprises 151 letters (Ethe 1844). Ethe, 1846, ascribed to Shaikh Yahya Munyari, actually consists of letters of Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi.

All the letters in the first two volumes of the *Mukatabat* were written after 1579. They were primarily intended to explain Akbar's political achievements and religious and administrative policies, and secondarily to arouse the good will of powers outside India and, by encouraging loyalty and obedience in the Mughal nobles, to facilitate the fulfilment of the Emperor's ambitions.

The diplomatic letters to the sherifs of Mecca, and to the rulers of Turan, Iran, Kashghar and Spain tend to show that India's international relations had greatly expanded and were established on a new and entirely different basis. The letters were no longer intended only to strengthen bonds of friendship among powers of the same religious or sectarian persuasion, but were designed to arouse respect and friendship for the Mughals among powers who not only had different religious or sectarian beliefs but also suspected Akbar's political motives.

At the time the letters to the Sherifs of Mecca and 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg were written, a distorted image of Akbar's religious beliefs was being circulated in all parts of the Eastern Islamic world by disgruntled and rebellious elements. The letter to the Sherifs of Mecca seeks to refute malicious propaganda and offers financial assistance to the Sherifs and charity to the deserving in such a manner as to appeal to the Sherif's cupidity without making such charity seem as damaging to their prestige.

In the defensive apologia for Akbar's religious beliefs in his letter to 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg, Abu'l Fazl uses a unique literary technique. He offers no explanation, for Akbar's acts, nor does he seek to attribute motives to slanderers as he did in the letter to the Sherifs of Mecca; he dismisses all objections with a single grand gesture:

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[1] The work taken up by the author after completing the *Akhlaq i-Nasiri* is a brief description of sufism and its stages. (Ethe, 1890)

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Part of the project of writing the Khamsa planned by Faizi in 1594. (*AN*, III, p. 661).

> "We consider, however, that lengthy discourse about these things is unfitting, and so content ourselves with this verse which has been written concerning glorious ones of the Faith.
>
> *Verse*
>
> O God, people have said that He had a son; of the Prophet they have said that he was a sorcerer.
> Neither God nor the Prophet has escaped the slander of men. Much less I."[1]

Akbar loved watching flying pigeons, but Sultan Husain Mirza banned this pastime as un-Islamic.[2] A specimen of a letter of appointment to *muhtasibs* in the *Munshat i-Namkin* enjoins them to stop the practice of pigeon-flying, although the Emperor imposed no such restriction in his own case.[3] The letter acknowledging the receipt of pigeons which were sent by 'Abdu'llah Khan at the personal request of Akbar, offers the following apology for his indulgence in such sports:

> "We have been delighted by your procuring and sending fairy-flying pigeons from Farghana, and the able pigeon-fancier, Habib. In this, we have felt the fragrance of your love and concord. Though at first sight regard for a handful of feathers seems but sportiveness, yet, on further consideration it will appear that the sweep and play of these birds' flight (*charkh u-bazi*) of these birds remind us of the ecstasies of the dervishes, and leads to a contemplation of the Deity. God, who knows the secrets of hearts, knows that our apparent and casual occupation with such things is but a veil over the beauty of devotion to the First Cause, and that our soul is not satisfied with the mere outward appearance of wings and feathers."[4]

Shah 'Abbas had no quarrel with Akbar's religious policy, but in a draft of a letter to the Shah, Abu'l Fazl thought it prudent to open the subject of "universal concord." No one could understand this better than the Shah, who was descended from a sufi family. He writes:

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[1] *MA*, I, p. 13; *AN*, III, p. 498; Bev, III, p. 756.

[2] *Najatu'r Rashid*, f. 130a. It was a universal amusement in Central Asia. Akbar as a boy had preferred it to his books.

[3] *Munshat i-Namkin*, f. 106b.

[4] *MA*, I, p. 17, *AN*, III, p. 501, Bev, III, p. 760.

> "The various classes of mankind, who are a Divine deposit and treasure, must be regarded with the glance of affection, and efforts must be made to conciliate their hearts. It must be considered that the Divine mercy attaches itself to every form of creed, and supreme exertions must be made to bring oneself into the ever vernal flower-garden of Universal Concord. The increase of one's good fortune must always be kept in full view, for the eternal God is bounteous to all sorts and conditions of men. Hence it is fitting that kings, who are the shadows of Divinity, should not cast away this principle. For the Creator has established this sublime order (of kings) to discipline and guard of all mankind, so that they may watch over the honour and reputation of every class. Men do not knowingly and intentionally make mistakes in the ephemeral and transient affairs, of this world; why then should they be negligent in affairs of faith and religion, which are permanent and everlasting?
>
> Every sect comes into one of two categories. Either it is in possession of Truth, and in that case one should seek direction from it and accept its views; or it is in the wrong. Then it is unfortunately suffering from the disease of ignorance, and is a subject of pitying kindness, not for harshness and reproach. One must exercise wide toleration, and knock at the door of inspection; for in this way the veil will be removed from the wide extent of spiritualities and temporalities, and there will be ample life and fortune. One of the advantages of this method is that at a time of want of leisure and of the predominance of wrath, friends will not be destroyed under the idea that they are enemies; while enemies masquerading as friends will have no opportunity for deceit."[1]

The continuous repetition of these principles had transformed them into truisms of the Mughal politics, but to Shah 'Abbas the advice must have been heartening. To control his Qizilbash nobles and stop the encroachments of the Uzbegs and the Ottoman Turks he himself had raised a big army of Armenians, and had allowed monastic orders such as the Carmelites, the Augustinians and the Capuchin Friars to operate in his dominions.[2]

Far more difficult was the task of justifying Akbar's political policy to both Shah 'Abbas and 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg. All three powers were playing their own political game. 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg and Shah 'Abbas were mutual enemies, but Akbar's interests required relations with both of them to be maintained. The conquests of 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg had made Farghana, his eastern frontier, and Balkh and Badakhshan, his southern. Balkh was held for him by Nazar Muhammad Khan, and Badakhshan by Mirza Sulaiman. Expelled from their territories by the powerful 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg, the former ruling chiefs and princes of the region took refuge in India and found *mansabs*.

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[1] *MA*, I, p. 31.

[2] Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia* (London, 1958), p. 175.

Mirza Hakim held Kabul under Akbar's suzerainty and in 'July 1585 after Mirza Hakim's death, he annexed it to his own emirde. 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg's hopes in this area were thus hwarted, and the diverted his ambitions to Khurasan. First he conquered Herat, and then invested Mashhad. He considered Khurasan as the natural boundary of Transoxiana. This growing empire of 'Abdu'llah Khan's drove from Akbar's mind the last vestiges of his dream of annexing "the ancestral kingdom"; he now began to make more serious efforts to strengthen his own frontiers. In 1586, he annexed Kashmir, to save it from 'Abdu'llah Khan, were he to turn his attention to this side of his territory after conquering Kashghar. After the loss of Herat, Qandahar was cut off from the Iranian government and appeared ready to fall into the hands of the Khan; but in 1590, Akbar seized without difficulty. In 1593, he annexed Sind and Baluchistan. Thus his boundaries were contiguous both with Iran and Transoxiana. From 1585 to late in 1598 Akbar stayed in the Punjab, with occasional tours to Kashmir and Kabul, to make his presence felt by his two powerful neighbours. It was when 'Abdu'llah Khan died in the beginning of 1598 that Akbar left for Agra, to pay personal attention to the Deccan where his generals were bungling the task of annexing Ahmadnagar.

It fell to the lot of Abu'l Fazl to explain and justify Akbar's activities both to Transoxiana and to Iran. The novelty of the circumstances led him to evolve the exceptionally original style of diplomatic correspondence for which he is so famous. 'Abdu' llah Khan Uzbeg is said to have remarked that he was more afraid of Abu'l Fazl's pen than of Akbar's arrows.[1]

In his drafts Abu'l Fazl presents an impressive list of Akbar's conquests in order to overawe 'Abdu'llah Khan and Shah 'Abbas;

[1] Blochmann, p. LI.

but does not fail to point out that the principal motive of Akbar's "autocracy, sword-bearing and clime-conquering was shepherding and doing the work of watch and ward." The secret of his success was, that his activities did not proceed from self-will and self-indulgence but were designed to show mercy to his people and to obliterate their oppressors. The letter of 1596 further tells 'Abdu'llah Khan:

> "The churches and temples of the infidels and heretics have become mosques and holy shrines for the masters of orthodoxy . . . All the leaders and stiff-necked individuals of the hosts of Hindus and others, have placed the rings of obedience in their ears and been enrolled among the victorious armies . . . We too in accordance with the principle 'Do good as God doth good to thee' devote our energies towards promulgating the laws of kindness, laying the foundation of justice, spreading the light of benevolence, and irrigating the gardens of men's hopes and peace, keeping them fresh and verdant with the dew of the clouds of graciousness and beneficence.'"[1]

Likewise, in the letter to Shah 'Abbas, the conquest of Kashmir is ascribed to the blessings of the Imams of the Isna 'Ashari Shi'is. The purpose of the annexation of Tattah and Sind and the subjugation of the Baluch, the Shah is informed, is to open the road to Iraq and Khurasan. A long explanation for the annexation of Qandahar, is given. It says that the Mirzas, the governors of Qandahar, were presumptuous and unfriendly to the Shah. Akbar had first intended to send an army against the Mirzas to coerce them, and then to send a large army to help the Shah; but as this last step was likely to be misunderstood by the common people, he refrained from sending an army to assist the Shah. Meanwhile, the Mirzas had submitted; so he gave them *jagirs* in Multan, a fairer and a more fertile land than Qandahar. The imperial army had taken Qandahar, and the Shah now needed no reinforcements.

The reason, for making the Punjab the Mughal headquarters, as alleged to Shah 'Abbas, was to conquer Akbar's ancestral kingdom of Transoxiana not in his own interest alone, but to help the Shah. The intended invasion was given up, only because

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[1] *MA*, I, p. 14; *AN*, III, p. 499; Bev, III, p. 757.

'Abdu'llah Khan repeatedly sent envoys and made earnest requests for peace.[1]

The letters to 'Abdu'llah Khan describe the reasons for Akbar's ambitious projects of conquest even more diplomatically. It says that his main ambition was primarily to annihilate "the Feringi infidels" (the Portuguese) in order to cleanse the road for pilgrims to the holy places. He had refrained from undertaking this project because some nobles of Iran had rebelled against their monarch, and Turkey, taking advantage of this, had several times, sent its troops against Iran. In view of 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg's friendly relations with Turkey, which were based on hopes of mutual expansion at the cost of the frontier provinces of Iran as well as on Sunni zeal, Akbar decided to ignore the Shah's "deviation from the highway of Sunnism"[2] but, with "the relationship of that dynasty with the family of the Prophet" as a basis of friendship, to help Iran. He advises 'Abdu'llah Khan that he likewise should march from Turan to reinforce the Iranian army, so that the Indian and Turanian armies might collaborate in helping the Shah against the Turks. This scheme, the letter says, would provide an occasion for the "meeting of the two seas of glory and superiority and the conjunction of the two auspicious planets," and would be helpful to both. The letter goes on:

> "By oral communications, without the intervention of messengers and messages, the foundations of love and unity may be made stronger, and various heartfelt words and secrets allied to truths, which are concealed in our hearts, and also matters of theology and observance of the truth may be mentioned in a friendly meeting, and we may also hear those refined subtleties in matters of Divine knowledge which have cast their rays on the soul of that paragon of magnificence ('Abdu'llah Khan). The cream of life and the excellence of prosperity consists in sociability and spiritual intercourse, especially between two men, chosen of God and glanced upon by the court of sublimity."[3]

The scheme proposed in the letter was visionary; but it reminded 'Abdu'llah that were he to favour Turkey, Akbar might turn the scale by putting his weight behind Iran. The suggestion that they should compare notes about their respective spiritual experiences highlighted the importance of Akbar's spiritual experience which he believed had been had only by a chosen few.

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[1] *MA*, I, pp. 28-32.

[2] *MA*, I, p. 15; *AN*, III, p. 499; Bev, III, p. 758.

[3] *Ibid*, I, pp. 15-16, *Ibid*; III, p. 500; Bev, III, p. 759.

By 1596, Akbar had firmly consolidated his North West frontiers. Shah Rukh Mirza, the claimant to the throne of Badakshan, had entered Akbar's service; so had some other princes of Transoxiana. No longer was the Mughal frontier limited to the river Indus and the Sulaiman Range; the Hindu Kush now separated the empire of Akbar from that of 'Abdu'llah Khan, and Akbar held "the twin gates of Hindustan"—to Iran.[1] The Afghan tribes of the Sulaiman Range were still troublesome, but Akbar's control of the Kabul and Qandahar regions had isolated them. 'Abdu'l Momin, 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg's son, had been trying for some years to seize control of his aging father's dominions. It seemed that Akbar would never leave the Punjab.

All these developments had thwarted 'Abdu'llah Khan's ambitions for expansion. He was keen to secure a firm guarantee from Akbar that the Timurid princes of Transoxiana would not be given asylum in India and that the Hindu Kush would be accepted as the barrier between Transoxiana and India. He expatiated on the advantages of friendship, but Akbar knew his own advantageous position and decided to dictate his own terms of peace. The first letter in the *Mukatabat* addressed to 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg evades the issue, yet the skilful diplomatic language of Abu'l Fazl furnishes it with a facade of friendship. It responds in enthusiastic general terms to 'Abdu'llah's overtures, but does not commit Akbar to making Hindu Kush the boundary. It only asserts Akbar's neutrality in the tangled relations between other powers. Abu'l Fazl writes:

> "For example, when the ruler of Iran, relying upon former ties, recently sent Yadgar Sultan Shamlu to us and asked for help, we did not consent. Also, when Shah Rukh Mirza petitioned that he might have a *jagir* in Kabul, or Kashmir, or Sawad, Bajaur and Tirah–which are cold countries (*Sard Ser*)–we did not grant his request, because of (your) proximity; instead we gave him a *jagir* in the province of Malwa. Also we summoned the Mirzas of Qandahar to Court and committed that

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[1] *A'in*, II, p. 192; Jarrett, II, pp. 408-09.

> country—which had formerly belonged to the Imperial (Mughal) territories—to the charge of old servants of the house of Babur, lest the Turani troops should attack that quarter under the conception that it belonged to Iran, and so give rise to disturbance in your territories and ours."

The letter rejects the motives imputed to Akbar's long stay in the Punjab, and tells of his decision to go to Agra; but a clear answer to the boundary question is avoided by making an impossible proposal:

> 'In fact, if the cordial expressions conveyed by messengers and letters be acted upon, what could be better? Or let a place be fixed and let us there have a feast of concord, and let us there discuss, without the intervention of any go-between, matters of religion and state, and things temporal and spiritual!"[1]

The letter then begins to describe Akbar's conquests of Kashmir, Sind and Thatta and tells how the ferocious and savage Afghans of Sawad, Bajaur and Tirah, who were impediments to the trade caravans from Turan, had been crushed or tamed, a large number annihilated, many sold, and the rest became submissive. Similarly, the road to Iran had been cleared of the depredations of the monstrous Baluchs. The letter goes on to give the list of Akbar's other conquests including those in the Deccan and Orissa.

The letter to the ruler of Kashghar is marked by consummate diplomacy. Its significance lies firstly in the fact that Akbar has conquered Kashmir; thereby making his frontier contiguous with Kashghar; and secondly, in its intention to arouse Kashghar's hope of help from Akbar should 'Abdu'llah Khan invade it. Earlier, Kashghar had sent an envoy to Akbar, but received no reply. Immediately after the annexation of Kashmir, Akbar not only sent an ambassador to Kashghar, but contemplated sending an envoy to Khata (Northern China) and therefore was keen to have a detailed account of that part of the world. The kind of information sought was most interesting; he wished to know about its relations with other powers, and the administration and judiciary of Khata. He also requested the ruler of Kashghar to obtain for him detailed information about the elite of Khata, its warriors, statesmen, philosophers, artisans and craftsmen. Lastly, he wished to know about its religion.[1]

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[1] *MA*, I, p. 6; *AN*, III, p. 705; Bev, III, p. 1055.

The letter to the Sherifs of Mecca seeks to extend Akbar's influence there for both political and religious reasons.[2]

The letters to Raja 'Ali Khan, the ruler of Khandesh,[3] and Burhan Nizamu'l Mulk, of Ahmadnagar[4] are expressive of Akbar's Deccan policy and of measures taken by him to annex independent neighbouring powers to the Mughal empire.

At the end of August 1591, Faizi and Khwaja Aminu'd Din were sent as ambassadors to Raja 'Ali Khan and Burhan Nizamu'l Mulk respectively, with a letter for each.[5] Several schemes for penetration into the Deccan, which we shall discuss in another chapter,[6] had already collapsed. In 1586, Mirza 'Aziz Koka had failed firstly because of his inability to co-operate with other generals and secondly because Raja 'Ali Khan had succeeded in combining the forces of Khandesh, Ahmadnagar and Berar under his own leadership in order to resist the Mughal invasion.[7] Early in May 1591, Burhan Nizamu'l Mulk, a protege of Akbar's, had seized the throne of Ahmadnagar with the help of Raja 'Ali Khan;[8] and the time was ripe to make them tributory chiefs of the Mughals. Abu'l Fazl's letters skilfully combine hopes and threats. The letters to both describe the following motives to his conquests:

> "The powerful Sultans whose lofty minds are devoted to the conquest of the world and mankind want nothing from the rulers of the regions and the lords of different areas but loyalty and obedience."[9]

Burhan Nizamu'l Mulk is urged to enforce the same regulations in his sultanate as prevailed in the Imperial domain, familiar to him from the time when he was an Imperial *mansabdar*. He is asked to patronise the old noble families, to give encouragement to sincere and truthful persons and to favour learned men, scholars and philosophers. He is advised to be vigilant in restraining the strong from oppressing the weak and making the life of the submissive and obedient peaceful and prosperous. Lastly, he is informed that *farmans* of advice were being sent to 'Adil Khan of Bijapur, and Quṭbu'l Mulk of Golkunda indicating that they, unlike their ancestors, should submit to the Emperor so that their combined forces might conquer all the ports and drive out the Europeans. The letter concludes with the warning that the mere fact that the Deccan was far from the Mughal capital should not make the powers there neglectful of Akbar's resourcefulness.[1]

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[1] *MA*, I, pp. 33-34. [2] *Ibid*, I, pp. 34-35.

[3] *Ibid*, I, pp. 68-75. [4] *Ibid*, I, pp. 75-77.

[5] *AN*, III, pp. 596-97; Bev, III, p. 909.

[6] *Infra*.

[7] *AN*, III, p. 489; Bev, III, p. 799-800.

[8] *Ibid*, III, p. 568; *Ibid*, III, p. 859.

[9] To Raja 'Ali Khan (*MA*, p. 72). To Burhan (*MA*, I, p. 76).

The letter to Raja 'Ali Khan calls his attention to the fact that he did not assist Khan i-'A'zam Mirza 'Aziz adequately, but does not hold this against him, stating it was known he had only been prevented by circumstances over which he had no control for otherwise his loyalty and devotion to the Emperor was not in question. It tickles his vanity by informing him that the Emperor had made him responsible for all matters relating to the Deccan, but reminds him of his duty to return thanks to God for Imperial favours, and to reciprocate by serving the Emperor dutifully.

The list of Akbar's conquests contained in this letter is intended to overawe Raja 'Ali, who is informed of the arrival of the ambassadors from Iran and Turan. Akbar's relations with them are described in such a way as to give him a feeling of inferiority. The Shah, expressing sentiments of sincerity and humility, has requested all sorts of help. The Safavid dynasty owes its power to the help Shah Isma'il got from the descendants of Turkish prisoners whom Timur had set free at the request of Shah Safi,[2] the ancestor of Shah Isma'il. For the sake of these ties of friendship, Akbar has given up the idea of annexing Qandahar and Sistan to his empire. Likewise he has abandoned the idea of conquering Badakhshan and handing it over to Mirza Shah Rukh mainly because he has received several ambassadors and gifts from 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg. The moral of these stories is, said to be that the Emperor demands sincerity and friendship alone from great rulers.

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[1] *MA*, I, p. 77.

[2] *MA*, I, p. 70. This version of the rise of the Safavids, although unhistorical, is an interesting specimen of the propaganda which the Indian Timurids and their historians made to counteract the Irani claims that Shah Tahmasp's help had saved Humayun's dynasty.

The repeated mention of what Akbar expects from great powers is intended to impress upon the Deccan rulers that under Mughal paramountcy obedience is more rewarding than rebellion or independence. The letter recounts a number of favours extended by Akbar to Raja 'Ali Khan, crowning all by implying that Prince Murad has been posted to Malwa merely for Raja 'Ali Khan's benefit; so he must obey the Prince without reservation and submit through him his requests to the Imperial court, being assured that they will be accepted without fail.[1]

The two circular letters in the *Mukatabat* are documents of singular importance. One, addressed to all the high officers of State from *kotwals* and *'amils* to governors and princes, contains a code of conduct for them, and represents the spirit of new administrative reforms.

It reiterates the principle that kingship and lordship were acts of watch and ward. No officer should interfere with the people's religious beliefs, for no one deliberately chooses an incorrect religion. The *kotwals* of cities, towns and big villages were responsible for the conduct of both temporary and permanent residents of the area under their control. They were required to keep a complete census with details of the profession and activities of each individual. The town or city was to be divided into *muhallas* (quarters) and each *muhalla* was to be placed under a *mir-muhalla* (chief of the *muhalla*). Every inhabitant was to help his neighbour in the event of theft or fire. No one was allowed to accommodate a guest without bringing the fact to the notice of the *mir-muhalla*. The official newswriter had to keep a record of all visitors in his registers. The host was to act as a surety for his guest. The arrivals and departures of temporary residents of the *muhalla* were to be notified to the *mir-muhalla*. The residents were required to take turns or watch in their *muhalla* during the night and prevent thefts and robbery. In the event of thefts, the residents of a *muhalla* had either to produce the thieves or make the loss good. The property of a deceased person was to be given to his heir. If the heir was not traceable, custodians had to be appointed and the matter reported to Court so that whenever a claimant did appear he could receive his due. Unlike the practice in Turkey, an heirless estate was not to be appropriated by the government. The *kotwal* had to enforce the complete prohibition of alcohol; liquor could only be consumed on medical grounds. The *kotwal* was ordered to assign separate bathing places for men and women on the river banks. He had to see that the rich did not hoard grain for selling at times of scarcity for huge profits. He was to look after the celebration of newly introduced festivalc, suh as the Nawruz, while the old festivals were to continue as before.

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[1] *MA*, I, pp. 72-73. Abu'l Fazl's son Shaikh 'Abdu'r Rahman was married to a daughter of Raja 'Ali Khan.

The *'amils* and other officers responsible for the administration of villages were ordered to promote agriculture, distribute *taqawi* (agricultural loans) and not let land fit for agriculture remain uncultivated. Attempts had to be made to increase the production of *jins i-kamil* (the counterpart of modern 'cash crops'). Agreements made with *ra'yat i-riza* (cultivators) could in no circumstances be violated by the *'amils*. No soldier was permitted to stay in a house belonging to a ryot.

Officers were enjoined not to depend upon their judgment alone but were advised to consult others. No punishment was to be meted out in haste; all legal disputes had to be investigated thoroughly. In inflicting punishment, its effect and consequences had to be taken into account. All cases involving capital punishment had to be referred to the Imperial court, unless there was danger of rebellion, in which case the high officers could act on their own initiative. Lastly, duties were to be allotted in accordance with their importance; senior men of high *mansab* were not to perform duties which could be delegated to junior local officers.[1]

The *farman* dated 990/1582 prohibiting taxes on the necessities of life is designed to promote trade and commerce, but its important effects upon the common people are also emphasised. It seeks to ensure that the weak should be protected from the high-handedness of the strong, and emphasises that Akbar considered the ryot as his real offspring and Divine trust.[2]

The letters which Abu'l Fazl drafted for Akbar or wrote himself to the princes, nobles and other high dignitaries of the government supplement and complement each other. Their principal aim is to enlist support for Akbar's military and administrative schemes. They describe Akbar's conquests in order to fill the minds of his nobles with pride in their Emperor's achievements and to convince them that each new victory was instrumental in making Akbar increasingly humble before God. The defeat of enemies and rebels are not attributed to their incapacity or weakness but to the fact that they were forsaken by Divine grace.

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[1] *MA*, I, pp. 57-58.

[2] *Ibid*, I, pp. 67-68.

A letter written to Murad some time after November 1592 reminds him how the prophecies made by Akbar on the occasion of the rebellion of Yadgar in Kashmir proved true. It tells of Akbar's return to Lahore after successful trip to Kashmir, and adds that the people of Hindustan, who had long been deprived of the privilege of seeing the Divine light associated with their Emperor, would very shortly be gratified.[1]

In another letter Khan i-Khanan is told of the disastrous expedition against the Yusufza'is, in which Raja Bir Bal lost his life in February 1586. The calamity that befell the imperialists is ascribed to a divine dispensation which had deprived them of judgment. It says:

> "The highest ambition of the travellers on the highway of loyalty and friendship is that they should sacrifice their life for the cause of their *qiblahgah* (master), but we hoped this would only occur in connection with some loftier service or rare enterprise."[2]

The other letter addressed to Khan i-Khanan in the first volume of the *Mukatabat* announces the receipt of 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg's letters and gifts, including the pigeons specially the one named Habib. It gives a turgid account of the pigeons with the peculiarities of each of them, and remarks also upon Habib. To impress Akbar's affection upon him, he says how desperately he longed to converse with Khan i-Khanan at the time of the presentation of the pigeons.[3]

The letter of condolence on Hakim Abu'l Fath's death says that holy souls suffered no change when they passed from the dark chambers of the world; it was a mere transfer from one dwelling to another.[4]

The letters to Mirza 'Aziz Koka are the acme of diplomacy. The letter in the first volume was written on behalf of Akbar, and the three letters in the second by Abu'l Fazl in his private capacity, all after Mirza 'Aziz's departure to Mecca early in 1593. The storm of discontent between Akbar and Mirza 'Aziz had been brewing from the time of the introduction of the *dagh* and the reasons of the Mirza's departure to Mecca were both personal and political, as his letter to Akbar shows.[1] He was highly efficient, but extremely egotistic and hot-tempered. Politically the new administrative regulations and the dominance of the new elite at Court had alienated him from Akbar and his favourites. Religious developments kept alight the smouldering fire of dissatisfaction.

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[1] *MA*, I, pp. 39-41.

[2] *Ibid*, I, pp. 43-45.

[3] *Ibid*, I, p. 49.

[4] *Ibid*, I, p. 54.

Before receiving Mirza 'Aziz Koka's letter announcing his departure, Akbar had already sent him a letter drafted by Abu'l Fazl. It took no exception to 'Aziz's going on pilgrimage, but regretted his hasty decision to leave without permission from Emperor or the approval of his mother. It reassured him of Imperial favour, and advised him to return immediately to please his mother, who was unable to bear his separation. The letter concluded by saying that Akbar had long been planning to send an ambassador to the Sultan of Turkey in order to strengthen the bonds of friendship between them but only now had it been definitely decided upon. An ambassador would be sent to the Sultan either together with the messenger who brought this letter to him, or soon afterwards. Therefore it was only fit that he should return to the Imperial court before the ambassador reached Turkey.[2]

No ambassador was in fact sent to Turkey. This remark was only a threat that if he did not leave Mecca immediately, Akbar could have him expelled with the Sultan's help, and that he was mistaken to count on Turkey's support.

Abu'l Fazl, who had not previously written to Mirza 'Aziz, also wrote him a letter at Akbar's command, requesting him to take immediate charge of Gujarat and appoint someone in whom he had confidence as his counsellor—someone who would privately convey to him what was going on, and give him a truthful opinion. He concluded the letter with the remark:

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[1] Mirza 'Aziz's letter to Akbar; John Rylands Library, Manchester; Persian Ms. no. 425.

[2] *MA*, I, pp. 56-57.

> "Oh 'Aziz! I don't go so far as to hope that you should be friendly with me. I only request you to rid your heart of your nebulous and imaginary enmity against me and make your discerning heart a rose garden."[1]

Before he received these letters, Mirza 'Aziz had already written a harsh letter to Akbar denouncing both his religious beliefs and his favourites.[2] Akbar seems to have sent no reply, but ordered Abu'l Fazl to answer the letter. Meanwhile he must have brought pressure to bear on the Mirza through the Sherifs. Disillusioned and frustrated, the Mirza wrote a letter of apology to Abu'l Fazl. The copies of the two letters are not available but the recapitulation of points raised in Mirza 'Aziz's letter shows that, eschewing religious bitterness, the Mirza complained of promotions and favours given to Qilich Khan and Mirza Raja Man Singh. In his reply Abu'l Fazl took the opportunity of explaining his own position at the Court and the sort of devotion to the Imperial duties which was expected of the nobles. On behalf of Akbar he informed the Mirza that in his absence the duties of the Imperial household had to be carried out by someone or other, therefore his complaint about someone else being put in charge of affixing the Imperial seals on *farmans* was frivolous and had only emerged because he was overpowered by anger. After describing different categories of servants and their functions he informed him that merely to be dissatisfied with the master was heresy, let alone making complaints against him.[3] The reasons that impelled 'Aziz Koka to return to India were again both political and personal, but Abu'l Fazl's letter must have helped him to convince himself that his true place in the world was at Akbar's Court.

Like Abu'l Fazl's letters to Mirza 'Aziz Koka, other letters in the second volume of the *Mukatabat* addressed to the princes, nobles and *mansabdars* seek to justify Akbar's administrative policies and motives where postings and transfers were concerned. They appeal to them to believe that Akbar's plans were divinely inspired and their furtherance would be a means of serving their own interests. The Emperor's great intuitive ability helped him to

[1] *MA*, II, pp. 155-56.
[2] John Rylands Library, Manchester; Persian Ms. no. 425.
[3] *MA*, II, p. 158.

select wise and truthful officers to whom he assigned duties commensurate with their ability and capacity in order that they might return thanks to God by performing loyal services. The success of the officers assigned difficult jobs served to open the eyes of others to the sound judgment of the Emperor.

Abu'l Fazl's first letter to the Khan i-Khanan Mirza 'Abdu'r Rahim in the second volume of the *Mukatabat* highlights the above points. In 1583 Akbar appointed 'Abdu'r Rahim to lead an expedition against Muzaffar, claimant to the throne of Gujarat, who had rebelled and seized Ahmadabad. Early in January 1584 when Muzaffar and his army of 40,000 advanced to give him battle, 'Abdu'r Rahim had only 10,000 troopers; he did not wait for reinforcement, but engaged the enemy against fearful odds and routed their superior force.[1] He was then only 28 years old, and had been given this assignment in preference to older and more experienced nobles. In recognition of his achievements, Akbar promoted him to a *mansab* of 5,000 and gave him his father's title of Khan i-Khanan.[2] Abu'l Fazl, informing him of Akbar's great appreciation of his exploits, heartily congratulates him on the award of the title and the *mansab* and says:

> "The Bestower of Gifts, by manifesting the marvellous abilities of that eminent and fortunate one, which were hidden from the wise men of the time, has brought envious and misguided people to the highway of justice and has impressed His Majesty's knowledge of the Divine mysteries upon the minds of high and low in the choicest manner."[3]

He then goes on to suggest some principles of administration. He nowhere assumes a patronising manner, but acknowledges his own shortcomings and lack of vision in political matters, thereby encouraging the Khan i-Khanan to apply his energies most ardently to the task of restoring peace and order in the province.

In December 1589, the Khani-Khanan was made *wakil* and Jaunpur was made his *iqta' (jagir)*, but shortly afterwards it was decided to send him in charge of an army to seize Qandahar.

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[1] *AN*, III, pp. 430-31; Bev, III, pp. 642-43.

[2] *Ibid*, III, p. 430; *Ibid*, III, p. 643.

[3] *MA*, II, pp. 91-92.

His *jagir* was annexed to the *khalisa* and he was assigned Multan and Bhakkar instead. It seems that he wrote to Akbar and Abul' Fazl complaining about the new arrangements. Akbar's *farman* is lost, but Abu'l Fazl's letter to the Khan i-Khanan, dated 16 Safar 998/25 December 1589 from Jalalabad, survives in the *Mukatabat*.

In it he asks the Khan i-Khanan not to take any bitter remarks as of Abu'l Fazl's making, since they had only been added at the Imperial command; he then advises him not to bother much about his former *jagir* of Jaunpur and the amount it had brought him in. Abu'l Fazl goes on to say that Khan i-Khanan's complaints were presented to the Emperor in summary form, and his letter was not reported in detail. Khan i-Khanan is advised not to delay his departure to Thatta and the expedition to Qandahar. Many troops in the Imperial camp were without employment, and he might borrow them. Abu'l Fazl assures him that Bakhshiu'l Mulk Nizamu'd Din Ahmad was looking after his interests.[1]

In December 1590 the Khan i-Khanan arrived in Bhakkar, but on examination convinced himself that the success of the Qandahar campaign was not possible without reducing Mirza Jani Beg of Sind to submission. He also complained of the lack of finances. Envoys from Qandahar and reports of the domestic troubles of Iran had convinced the Emperor that the time was ripe to seize Qandahar. Voicing the views held at the Court, Abu'l Fazl wrote to the Khan i-Khanan:

> "Unlike Thatta, Qandahar cannot always be easily captured. The Khan i-Khanan should conciliate the *zamindars* of the region such as Baluchs and the Afghans, attach them to the victorious army and proceed onwards to Qandahar. He and his court should obtain inspiration from the *Zafar Nama*, the *Shah Nama* and the *Chingiz Nama* and not from the *Akhlaq i-Nasiri*, the *Maktubat Shaikh Sharaf Munyari*, the *diwan* of *Khaqani* and the *Hadiqa* which talk of retirement. Fame can be purchased through money. Take loans on the promise of fifteen to ten or twenty to ten and make full efforts to seize Qandahar."[2]

[1] *MA*, II, p. 128.

[2] *Ibid*, II, p. 130.

On the Khan i-Khanan's insistence permission to conquer Sind was granted. He thereupon seized Lakhi, a narrow pass which secured the route to Thatta in the same way as Garhi did in Bengal, and Barahmula in Kashmir. Two hotly contested battles liquidated Mirza Jani Beg's strength. He finally surrendered in 1593, and was given a *mansab* of 3000 with Multan as *jagir.*[1]

During this period Abu'l Fazl wrote several letters to the Khan i-Khanan. Although the Court had originally opposed the Khan i-Khanan's request to conquer Thatta, once it was granted Abu'l Fazl began to write him letters, encouraging him to work whole-heartedly for his plan. In order to chase his gloom away, Abu'l Fazl repeatedly informed him of the pride which Akbar took in his exploits and the way he showered praise on him and assured him of the full support of friends such as he himself, Hakim Abu'l Fath and Hakim Humam.[2] Informing him that he had drafted an Imperial *farman* regarding Mirza Jani Beg, in the terms desired by the Khan i-Khanan, Abu'l Fazl added:

> "I cannot give more details because I am not a seller of benevolence. The sooner you are able to bring the Mirza (Jani Beg) to Court, the better it will be."[3]

In 1594, the Khan i-Khanan was ordered to perform the difficult task of assisting Prince Murad; who had been commanded to seize Ahmadnagar. The prince wanted the Khan i-Khanan to march with him upon Ahmadnagar immediately, but he demurred. In line with the policy he pursued in the conquest of Thatta, he wished to take with him Raja 'Ali Khan, who feared lest the movement of the army in the Deccan was directed against his lands. This delayed the Khan i-Khanan's departure. "Tale-bearers and interested persons" writes Abu'l Fazl in the *Akbar Nama*, 'widened the breach' between the Prince and the Khan i-Khanan. On 29 November 1595, the Khan i-Khanan and Raja 'Ali Khan hastened to join the Prince at Chandor, about 65 miles northwest of Ahmadnagar. The Prince did not grant them an interview, and when their armies arrived, he paid no attention to their officers. An audience was later granted, but by that time the behaviour of the drunken and incompetent Prince had disgusted the Khan i-Khanan. There was no love lost between the officers of the auxiliary troops and those of the Prince. Sadiq Khan, the guardian of Murad and a *mansabdar* of 4,000, and Shahbaz Khan, guardian to Mirza Shah Rukh, the governor of Malwa, were old enemies.

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[1] *AN*, III, pp. 637-38: Bev, III, p. 979.

[2] *MA*, II, pp. 118-19.

[3] *MA*, II, p. 139.

The failure of such an army was a foregone conclusion, despite Akbar's firm resolve to annex Ahmadnagar to his empire. It devolved upon Abu'l Fazl to persuade the leaders of different groups of the Mughal army to make a joint effort to win the battle. He wrote letters on the one hand to the Khan i-Khanan and Raja 'Ali Khan, and on the other to Sadiq Khan, Shah Rukh, and Qasim Khan Tabrizi, the *diwan* of Murad, urging them to give up their differences and to sacrifice personal interest to their obligations to the Imperial service. Knowing that Murad was a puppet in the hands of Sadiq Khan and Qasim Khan Tabrizi, Abu'l Fazl pointed out that those two should bear the burden of convincing the Prince that he should bolster up the feelings of the commanders serving under him. Abu'l Fazl wrote to Sadiq Khan that the time was ripe to utilize his innate abilities and capacity to conciliate others. It was essential to appease the Khan i-Khanan, that past differences should be forgotten, and that efforts should be made to increase feelings of amity. Trained in refined manners by His Majesty, the Princes stood in no need of instruction; but if something went amiss through human weakness, a wise and sincere authority such as Sadiq Khan was sufficient to set it right.[2]

Abu'l Fazl's first letter to Qasim Khan Tabrizi seeks to impress upon him the need so to improve the administration of the region under the control of the Prince as to reduce all *zamindars* and every rebel to submission. He then gives him a ten-point plan designed to make the Court of the Prince efficient, vigilant, just, benevolent and dignified.[3]

Abu'l Fazl also conveyed encouraging messages to the Khan i-Khanan. In a letter dated May 1595 he wrote to him that the vast territories of the Deccan were on the verge of falling into the Imperial hands and that he should therefore direct his entire energies to the completion of the task and be tolerant in his

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[1] *AN*, II, pp. 698-99; Bev, III, pp. 1045-47.

[2] *MA*, II, p. 182.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 176-77.

treatment of others.[1] Yet the gulf opened by differences between the Khan i-Khanan and the Prince Murad became unbridgeable; in 1598, Murad was recalled to Court, and the Khan i-Khanan was ordered to remain in the Deccan, although he too wished to go to Court. Abu'l Fazl warned him to think no more of leaving his command, and assured him that Akbar would not tarry long in Agra. As he was keen to conquer the Deccan, the Khan i-Khanan should realise that the opportunity for glory there, was very favourable.[2]

Abu'l Fazl's letters made no impression on any of the Deccan commanders. When Abu'l Fazl himself was sent to the Deccan, he soon became estranged from the Khan i-Khanan. His second last letter to the Khan i-Khanan in the *Mukatabat* is a mixture of sarcasm and sneers.[3]

Having failed to influence Murad through his favourites, when he died of drink, Abu'l Fazl wrote direct to his successor, Prince Daniyal, advising him to prevent the chief officers deserting by handling them tactfully. He advised that they should be granted separate interviews, be individually encouraged, and have their faults overlooked. It was essential to win through benevolence the hearts of all, particularly those of the high-ranking *mansabdars*. There were many ways of achieving that aim. When money was short, gifts should be distributed secretly, to disarm jealousy; otherwise robes, horses and money should be distributed openly. *Mansabdars* should be taken into the commanders' confidence; they should be promoted where appropriate and their *jagirs* increased. Important people should be visited at their residences. No gift from men of meagre resources was to be accepted. Often much could be achieved merely by sending a plate of food. Sincere people in whom the Prince had confidence should be encouraged to report privately upon the true state of affairs. Prayers should not be neglected, particularly the morning prayers. The blessings of ascetics and dervishes should be eagerly sought. Each business matter should be performed at its proper time. Historical and ethical works should be read out aloud regularly in the Prince's court, and discussed.[4]

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[1] *MA*, II, p. 141.

[2] *Ibid*, II, pp. 135-36.

[3] *Ibid*, II, pp. 152-53.

[4] *Ibid*, II, pp. 81-83.

As with the letters to Murad's favourites, Abu'l Fazl's letters to Daniyal in person fell on deaf ears, and his letters relating to the Deccan expedition failed as miserably as the earlier ones had succeeded. The situation in the Deccan was more complex and the nature of pressures was different as we shall see in a separate chapter.[1] Earlier his successful manipulations had been supported by Akbar's authority; in the Deccan his direct involvement blunted the sharp edge of his diplomatic knife.

His letters to his father and brothers are marked with the same philosophical vision and humanitarian outlook that are the hall-marks of his relations with both the Hindu and the Muslim elite. To his father he writes that:

> "That the garment (of duties) which fate has imposed upon me is responsible for making me a target of the envy of both elite and the common people, disturbs me greatly. The hands of my abilities have been able to perform no such deed as would repay the debts of obligation which I owe for my advancement. If I am not able to perform some such service to my own satisfaction, I ardently wish that I might be able, God willing, so to distinguish myself in the field of military duties as to give my master and benefactor grounds for bestowing favours on a student such as myself."[2]

Abu'l Fazl had neither time nor inclination to write letters unless he was forced to do so by political needs. Faizi wrote informally and frankly. Although his letters are among the best specimens of lucid and clear Persian prose, they did not receive the popularity which they deserved. His poetry relegated his prose to the background, and Abu'l Fazl's letters alone set the literary tone and standard.

The letters of Faizi were collected and arranged in 1035/1625-26 by Nuru'd Din Muhammad. His father was 'Ainu'l Mulk, a physician of Shiraz and his mother was a sister of Shaikh Faizi and Abu'l Fazl. In his preface, Nuru'd Din says that the poems of Faizi were collected and arranged by Abu'l Fazl, but that his prose compositions had been neglected. To save them from oblivion, he had made a collection divided into five *latifas* (pleasantries, or sections) and three *mantuqas* (expressions, or

[1] *Infra*.

[2] *MA*, II, pp. 84-85.

chapters).[1] The letters of the title *Lata'if i-Faiyazi* yield the date of compilation.

Latifa 1: Faizi's letters to Akbar
Latifa 2: Faizi's letters to the saints and the 'ulama
Latifa 3: Faizi's letters to physicians
Latifa 4: Faizi's letters to Saiyids and *amirs*
Latifa 5: Faizi's letters to his relations
Mantuqa 1: *Munajat* (A silent and fervent prayer) by Abu'l Fazl
Mantuqa 2: Miscellaneous anecdotes
Mantuqa 3: Miscellaneous letters to various relations

The *Lata'if i-Faiyazi* has not yet been published, and good manuscript copies are scarce.[2]

Letters to Akbar are dated between 24 August 1591 and 7 May 1593 when Faizi was deputed to be ambassador to the Deccan. The information contained in them is straightforward and reflects the sort of affairs in which the Emperor was interested. They may be divided into four sections.

1. The details of current affairs in the principal towns on his route from the Punjab to Burhanpur, given in his first letter, offer an invaluable insight into the administration as it was actually performed by the Imperial officers. The narrow hills between Ludhiana and Sihrind are described as dens of robbers, and the *faujdar*[3] as corrupt. Hafiz Rakhna, although old and decrepit, strives to maintain law and order in Sihrind and the people are satisfied with him. He has laid out attractive gardens there. Ya'qub Badakhshi, the *karori* of Thaneswar, performs his duties as *faujdar* efficiently and the highways under his jurisdiction are perfectly safe. Qasim, the *karori* of Panipat and an experienced *nawisinda*,[4] is honest and upright. He is fit to be entrusted with some suitable post at the Imperial court. Hakim 'Ainu'l Mulk is sedulously maintaining the tomb of Humayun and the tombs of various saints. He takes due care of living saints. The Gujar robbers have given an undertaking to him to

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[1] Rieu, II,ff. 792a, 97a.

[2] The British Museum Ms. (Edgerton 695) is incomplete and contains neither the *munajat* nor the last two *mantuqa*. The Bombay University (no. 101) and Lucknow University manuscripts are good; The Rampur Ms. is complete, but an 18th century copy. The Aligarh University manuscripts are defective.

[3] *LF*, (Edgerton, 695; Rieu, 792a), f. 100a.

[4] *Ibid*, ff. 100a-b.

refrain from highway robbery. Ustad Yusuf, an old man, is disloyal. Shaikh Bayazid, son of Shaikh Ahmad, is unique in administering Fathpur. Every minute detail is at his fingertips, and he is able to achieve much with only a small staff. Shah Quli's administration of Agra is satisfactory. He takes due care of the poor and the needy.

People spoke very highly of Nizamu'd Din Ahmad. He had crushed all the refractory elements in the *mawas*[1] near Agra, who had withheld payments of revenue and constructed, strongholds for their protection. At Dholpur, the stone inn erected by Sadiq Khan impressed Faizi very much; its hot bath and garden were attractive. The area was looked after effectively by Sadiq Khan's worthy son. At Gwaliar, Mir Murtaza appeared to him to be an able and experienced officer. The fort of Narwar was controlled by Narain Das, who was trying to perform the difficult task of guarding the highways through the scrubby jungle, but was not equal to it. Mir Mustafa was trying to crush the refractory elements in the area.

Faizi waxes eloquent in describing Malwa, and notes that its soil is most suitable for the cultivation of sugar-cane. He notes with regret that the administration of Buland Khan, the eunuch, has desolated it. He has sold the wood used in the houses constructed by Shihab Khan and other *mansabdars*, and the walls are crumbling. Although he is very old and on the verge of death, he has a heart of stone. At Sajawalpur, Khwaja Amin, the son-in-law of Wazir Khan, treats the ryots well, and has improved the agriculture of the *pargana* by distributing *taqawi* loans. The *karkhanas* of linen are well managed and are busy in weaving turbans and linen for His Majesty.

Faizi found Ujjain efficiently administered by Muhibb 'Ali. The sugar-cane in Qazi Baba's garden impressed him very greatly. Mandu was in a dilapidated condition. The Narbada was fordable. Isma'il Quli Khan, who held a *jagir* there, satisfactorily arranged the transmission of mail from Raja 'Ali Khan. On his way to Burhanpur, Faizi took care to visit eminent saints and dervishes and seek their blessings for the Emperor. They told him that God Almighty looked after the affairs of His Majesty and their prayers were not needed at all. Burhanpur and its vicinity were full of gardens and many fruits and vegetables were grown there.[1]

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[1] Rough country intersected by ravines and covered by forests.

2. The etiquette followed by the ambassador who was commissioned to deliver the Imperial *farmans*, and the forms of respect shown by the independent chiefs, forms the subject of the second important group of letters.[2]

3. Details about Raja 'Ali Khan's loyalty to the Emperor and the confusion in Ahmadnagar, and its conflicts with Bijapur, make a significant contribution to the value of the letters.[3]

4. Reports from the ports of western India on the movement of ships, and information about Iran, Turan, and Turkey are given with great care. In addition, there is a description of the achievements of eminent scholars and other talented persons, both from the Deccan[4] and Iran,[5] worthy of being invited to Akbar's Court.

Faizi's letters to the *sufis*, *'ulama*, physicians and Saiyids offer a valuable picture of the intellectual and social life of the elite of those days. Two glimpses given by Badauni of private gatherings of Faizi's guests serve a good background for the evaluation of the importance of Faizi's letters. The following are Badaunis own comments in connection with the biographical notice of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq.

> "Shaikh Faizi, after his return from the Deccan, following his custom of ingeniously tormenting his friends, was very desirous of gathering them round him in order to increase the attraction of his social circle and to indulge in conversation with them and was constantly annoying and troubling them (to come to him)."[6]

The other glimpse is embodied in a letter of Shaikh Ya'qub Sarfi to Badauni, written about 1594. He says:

> "I hope that whenever you sit in the Nauwab Faizi Faiyazi's apartment of fragrant grass, with its matting cooler in the mid-day heat of summer than the breezes of Kashmir, drinking the water, which, though warm, has been cooled with ice, and listening to sublime talk and witty conversation, you will think of me, a captive of the hardship of disappointment."[7]

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[1] *LF*, f. 100b-103b.
[2] *Ibid*, ff. 98 a-b.
[3] *Ibid*, ff. 105b-107b.
[4] *Ibid*, ff. 116b-17b.
[5] *Ibid*, ff. 118a-b.
[6] *MT*, III, p. 113; Haig, p. 170.
[7] *Ibid*, III, p. 144; *Ibid*, p. 203.

Under Faizi's roof assembled a galaxy of talents; besides poets there were 'alims, sufis, and philosophers. Whether at Agra or Fathpur, Lahore or the Deccan, he attracted talented people to his side and gave them encouragement commensurate with their merit. Poetry of all kinds was recited there, with verses impregnated with the spirit of Ibn 'Arabi's teachings being preferred. Although Abu'l Fazl gave high priority to the study of Ghazali's *Kimiya'i-Sa'adat*, the authority of Ghazali was not blindly accepted, and religious discussions were conducted objectively.[1] This naturally alienated him from orthodox scholars such as Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi, to whom his "universal concord" amounted to enmity to the Prophet Muhammad and Islam. Faizi was, however, averse to losing their friendship, for to do so was neither in harmony with his own nature nor useful to Akbar's religious policy.

Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq had left Delhi for Mecca in 995/1586-87 and had returned in 1000/1591-92. His departure from Agra for Delhi and thence to Mecca are attributed, by modern scholars, to his being unable to advocate puritanical Islam at Akbar's court.[2] The Court was at that time undeniably open to the members of all religious groups but there was no persecution to scholars with no political ambitions, such as Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq. The Shaikh's contemporaries believed that he had gone to Mecca solely out of religious zeal and a desire for further studies.

Faizi, on his return from the Deccan, plunged himself into the task of completing the monumental Arabic commentary of the Qur'an which he seems to have commenced in 1587-88. After completing it on 10 Rabi' II 1002/3 January 1594, he was naturally keen to know Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq's opinion of it. He wrote informing him of the completion of the Commentary, and emphasising that the work was not the result of his own deliberate effort but of a Divine inspiration, and that he would like to present the Shaikh with a copy. He added that Mulla Haidar Muamma'i had pointed out that the *Ikhlas*[3] chapter give the chronogram of the completion of the *Tafsir*.[4]

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[1] One of the early complaints of Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi was the allegedly disrespectful tone of Shaikh Abu'l Fazl in his references to Ghazali (*MRM*, p. 206).

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 154-56.

[3] The Unity, *Qur'an*, Chapter 112.

[4] *LF*, ff. 141 a-b.

In this letter he hinted a wish that they might meet. About this time, Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq's preceptor Shaikh Musa Qadiri gave Faizi to understand that his disciple was likely to visit them. This whetted Faizi's desire for a meeting, and he wrote three short letters to Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq requesting him to call.[1] Ultimately it came to be known that Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq preferred to lead a retired life and that Shaikh Musa was wrong in repeatedly saying otherwise, Faizi wrote:

> "My request now is that you should not give yourself over to melancholy in your place of retirement. Two or three days ago that choicest of saints, Miyan Shaikh Musa, honoured my poor dwelling with a visit, and said that it was not improbable that you would be coming hither about this time. I pressed him to tell me what grounds he had for saying this, but he left the matter uncertain and undetermined. I swear to God, the Supreme Object of worship, that I gave him no hint of my own wishes, nor shall I do so.
>
> Hemistich
>
> When the time comes for speech what need is there of a letter?
> If you remain at home, it is light, and if you come it will be light upon light.
>
> I hope that you will not vex yourself further regarding this matter. But if I had wings I would sit daily on the roof of your chamber and would gather the grains of your affectionate discourse, trilling forth the song of my desire."[2]

It seems that Faizi sent Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq the *Nal Daman* which he had presented to Akbar in December 1594. The praise of the Prophet and the account of *Mi'raj* (Muhammad's ascent to heaven) in the *Nal Daman* were regarded as masterpieces of devotional poetry. Moved by the letter and the *masnawi*, Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq wrote explaining allegorically his motives for leading a retired life. He divided living beings into two categories: Those who were engrossed by comfort and luxury and were slaves to lust and sensuality, and those who had retired from the world and led an ascetic life. He added that he found himself on the horns of a dilemma about selecting the right course for himself but his inner self urged him to refrain from listening the advice of his carnal self and to take to the arduous road to asceticism. Finally he hoped that Divine will would predominate.[1]

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[1] *LF*, ff. 141b-42a.

[2] *MT*, III, p. 116; Haig, p. 171.

Faizi acknowledged the letter and expressed satisfaction that the Shaikh did not intend to stop writing to him. He informed him that after compiling the *Nal Daman*, he had started the *Markaz i-Adwar*.[2] In another short letter he quoted a verse which he had submitted to the Emperor. It expressed his deep sense of grief over his being far removed from his ultimate goal i.e. God.[3] Indirectly it could be construed to mean his separation from Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq.

The letters of Faizi and Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq lay bare their respective attitudes towards Islam. Faizi's masterpiece of Quaranic commentary and praise of Prophet Muhammad made no impression upon Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq or Badauni. Over-confident about the correctness of their own notion of what Islam stood for, they rejected those with a different conception as misguided, heretics and infidels. Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq, in a bibliographical treatise entitled *Fihris al-Tawalif*, writes:

> "In these times he (Faizi) opened his lips to compose poetry and wrote eloquently. He was unique in his day in eloquence, rhetoric, vigour of style and force of diction. But alas, because he fell into the nethermost hell of heresy and vice, his writings are but fantasy. He has stained the forehead of his affairs with misfortune. The tongues of the followers of the religion of the Great Prophet (Muhammad) avoid uttering his name and that of his associates."[4]

The wish to live in amity and peace with his enemies precluded Faizi from paying him back in the same coin. In a letter to a physician (Hakim), probably to Hakim 'Ainu'l Mulk, Faizi paid a glowing tribute to Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq's piety and scholarship and requested the Hakim to visit the Shaikh's house and look after him well.[5]

Faizi's letter to Akbar dated 23 February, 1592, recommending Badauni's restoration to favour shows that he, Abu'l Fazl and Mir Fathu'llah left no stone unturned in helping orthodox Sunnis who did not have political ambitions, thereby preventing them from becoming hostile to the Emperor. Praising Badauni's accomplishments in all branches of learning specialised in by the Indian Mullas, and his knowledge of Indian astrology, Faizi wrote that Badauni was not avaricious, had a contented mind, and was truthful, straightforward, respectful, unambitious, humble-spirited, meek and moderate in his requests. He concluded:

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[1] *AA*, pp. 160-62.
[2] *LF*, ff. 138a-b, 142b.
[3] *Ibid*, f. 143a.
[4] *Fihris al-Tawalif* (Ms. Personal Collection), f. 6b.
[5] *LF*, f. 161b.

> "Since Your Majesty's court is the court of the just, your slave, acting as though he were present in person at the foot of the august throne, saw a helpless man suffering persecution and represented the case to Your Majesty. Had he not represented it at this time he would, in a manner, have been guilty of insincerity and want of proper regard for truth."[1]

The orthodoxy of Badauni made him forget his duty of gratitude to Faizi, but neither Faizi nor Abu'l Fazl changed their kindly attitude towards him and other orthodox Muslims. In a private letter to one of the physicians, Faizi praised Badauni for his prudence and loyalty as a friend.[2]

Faizi's letters to Ghausi (Shattari)[3] of Mandu and Shaikh Hasan of Kalpi overflow with the same warmth of feeling as his letters to Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq. Ghausi, the author of the celebrated *Gulzar i-Abrar*, lived at Mandu, and he and Faizi had been friendly for many years past. Through him Faizi established contacts with the scholars of the Deccan, and both remained life-long friends. From his own personal knowledge, Ghausi could write that Faizi was a sufi rooted in the principles of *Wahdat al-Wujud*, and introspective by nature.[1]

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[1] *MT*, III.

[2] *LF*, f. 177b.

[3] Professor Nizami has reproduced the letters of Faizi to Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi in *Hayat i-Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq*. Professor Nizami seems not to have read the letters carefully, nor to have collated his mss. with such sound texts as the mss. in the Raza Library, Rampur, the Lucknow University Library, or the British Museum copy. Not all the letters addressed to Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq in his book were in fact written to him by Faizi. Of Professor Nizami's collection, only the first eight were addressed to Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq; they are on pages 345 to 355. The rest were written to others, as follows:

Letter 9 to Maulana Qutb, brother of Maulana Taqi Shustari, p. 356.
Letters 10-11 to Ghausi Mandawi (Shattari), pp. 356-61.
Letters 12-20 to Shaikh Hasan of Kalpi, pp. 361-77.
There are in fact fourteen letters here. Professor Nizami's text is disordered.

Shaikh Hasan of Kalpi was also a sufi of strong Wujudi beliefs. There are fourteen letters in the *Lata'if* addressed to him. The earliest, conveying the news of the birth of Prince Daniyal, is dated 14 Jumada I 980/22 September 1572.[2] Another letter written to Shaikh Hasan about December 1572, comprises a *ghazal* upon the inhabitants of Gujarat and a *masnawi* telling of a visit to Akbar by certain eminent citizens and former officers of Ahmadabad.[3] The *masnawi* emphasizes the Emperor's ambition to annex Gujarat, to extend his dominions as far as Turkey, and to uproot the Portuguese in order to open a road for pilgrimages to Mecca.

Faizi's letters asking Shaikh Hasan to send him books are most interesting. In one, he asks him to send a book on the lives of the saints of India entitled *Tazkiratu'l Asfiya* and to bring to him all that he could find in the way of biographical notes on Indian sufis.[4] In another Faizi, who was compiling a biographical dictionary of poets, asked Shaikh Hasan to bring *Maqasidu'sh Shu'ara* with him and to copy out extracts from other works for his use, promising to acknowledge his help in the preface of his dictionary.[5] In a long letter Faizi apologises for the loss of a *Tabaqat i-Nasiri* borrowed from Shaikh Hasan and taken by Abu'l Fazl, although Faizi was making every possible effort to find it.[6]

Among the physicians, cum ishraqis he wrote mainly to Hakim Humam, Hakim 'Ain'ul Mulk and to a few others whose names are not given. A letter to Hakim 'Ainu'l Mulk shows that the duties of Hakim Abu'l Fath were assigned upon his death to Shaikh Abu'l Fazl.[7] To another Hakim he wrote that India was like a magnet, attracting high-minded people from other parts of the world. In India they found the same warm affection which they had in their own homeland and, forgetting the hardships of the journey, they settled down there.[8]

The letters to the grandees and nobles are few; one is addressed to Nizamu'd Din Ahmad, two to Mir Ma'sum Bhakkari and one to Raja 'Ali Khan of Khandesh. To Nizamu'd Din he once wrote that 'Urfi, a poet of outstanding merit was just then his guest.[1] In his letter to Raja 'Ali Khan he requested that folios containing the beginning of the *Tughluq Nama* of Amir Khusrau should be copied for him as the first and last folios of his own manuscript had been lost.[2]

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[1] *Gulzar i-Abrar*.
[2] *LF*, f. 148b.
[3] *Ibid*, ff. 149b-150a.
[4] *Ibid*, f. 147b.
[5] *Ibid*, f. 151b.
[6] *Ibid*, f. 152a.
[7] *Ibid*, f. 168a.
[8] *Ibid*, f. 182a.

Although Abu'l Fazl was his younger brother, Faizi's letters to him are marked by both respect and affection. The titles with which he chooses to address Abu'l Fazl are not only commensurate with the high status which he enjoyed at the Court but also hail him as a "unique pearl of the ocean of Divine knowledge, one who has transcended the world of perverseness, acquainted with the subtle secrets of the masters of *ijtihad,* and an expert in assaying the value of the jewls of *'itiqad* (religious belief).[3] In his letter to Abu'l Fazl condoling over their father's death, Faizi tells him that he would send him a book entitled *Musibat Nama* by Shaikh Faridu'd Din 'Attar, which had offered him great comfort.[4] In another letter, Faizi congratulates Abu'l Fazl on deciding to compile a book entitled *Zuhuru'l Anwar* (Appearance of Rays of Light) and informs him that he himself had intended to make a similar compilation, when he was at Fathpur, which was to have contained 1001 *ruba'is*[5] and been divided into 1200 chapters. He further tells him that he had made a detailed plan but that part of his manuscripts had been destroyed, and he was sending Abu'l Fazl a notebook containing part of the material.[6]

Faizi's letters to his other relatives indicate that their family had entered into matrimonial relationships with the families of some eminent religious dignitaries and saints of Delhi, Fathpur-Sikri, Agra and elsewhere. Among them were Shaikh Afzal Muhammad Qadiri of Agra, whose son Shaikh 'Abdu's Samad compiled the famous collection of biographies of Indian saints entitled *Akhbaru'l Asfiya.*[7] Shaikh Afzal was Faizi's brother-in-law. Khwaja *Husamu'd Din,*[8] who later became a disciple of the celebrated Naqshbandi saint, Khwaja Baqi Bi'llah, was also related, being the son of one of Faizi's sisters. Hakim 'Ainu'l Mulk was another brother-in-law. Still closer were their connections with Shaikh Salim's descendants; to one they married their sister Ladli Begum, and to another Abu'l Fazl's daughter Saliha. Some of these relatives held important posts, which allayed in some minds suspicions against the two brothers and Akbar's policy of peace with all.

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[1] *Ibid,* f. 174b. [2] *Ibid,* f. 176a [3] *Ibid,* f. 184b.
[4] *Ibid,* f. 185a. [5] *Ibid,* f. 185a. [6] *Ibid,* f. 186a.
[7] Storey p. 983. The work was completed in 1015/1606-07.
[8] *MRM*, ff. 194-97.

The letters of Hakim Abu'l Fath Gilani are also of considerable historical importance. The collection recently published by the Punjab University, Lahore, contains seventy-two letters addressed to a wide cross-section of the elite; among the nobles, A'zam Khan, Khan i-Khanan and Miran Sadr i-Jahan; among the 'alims and saints are Shaikh Ziyau'llah, son of Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus, Hajji Sufi, Shah Huzn, and Qazi Nuru'llah Shustari; among the physicians, Hakim Humam, Hakim Lutfu'llah, and Hakim Nurud'd Din.

Abu'l Fath's style is no different from that of other masters of Persian epistolography; it is ostentatious and elaborately ornate, with profuse quotations from the Qur'an, *hadis* and verses of eminent Persian poets. His letters are therefore invested with the traditional Islamic aura. His letter to Mirza 'Aziz Koka in 995/1587 announcing Akbar's success in subduing the Yusufza'is and the Raushana'is, typifies the propaganda literature of Akbar's reign, which was intended to impress the Muslim elite alone.

It begins with praise of God and the Prophet Muhammad. The genesis of the creative activity of God is the "Rality of Muhammad," and Muhammad was created with no other objective but to bring back to the right path all those who had strayed from it. God declares in the Qur'an; "Call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation."[1] The Qur'an further says, "He whom Allah guides, he is on the right way."[2] "Is he whom Allah guides," "he whose breast Allah has opened to Islam?"[3] The reply is affirmative; but those who exhibit stubbornness exemplify the verse",. . . . and whom He leaves in error, thou wilt not find for him a friend to guide aright,"[4] and deserve the treatment commanded by the verse "And fight the polytheists all together . . ."[5] Compliance with the last verse is imperative for all Muslims, particularly for rulers. Hence Akbar, on receipt of the news that bands of irreligious people

[1] Chapter 16, verse 125.
[2] Chapter 18, verse 17.
[3] Chapter 39, verse 22.
[4] Chapter 18, verse 17.
[5] Chapter 9, verse 36.

and enemies of the *shari'a* (the Raushana'is and the Yusufz'ais) were making depredations upon merchants, sent an army numerous as the stars which fought fiercely against them, defeating and annihilating them. The news was being given to his grandees posted in all parts of the country. They should return thanks to God for this great victory, as He has promised, "If you are grateful, I will give you more."[1] Akbar had earlier tried hard to win peacefully the support of Jalala, son of Bayazid Raushana'i, but having failed he took strong repressive measures against both the Raushana'is and the Yusufza'is. The cry of Islam was raised to appeal to the sentiment of the orthodox Sunni elite, who considered the Raushana'is as heretics, as well as to allay the suspicion of the Afghans in the Mughal army. Here the straight-forward and traditional style of Abu'l Fath[1] was expected to serve Akbar's ends better than the diplomatic language of Abu'l Fazl, and hence it was given preference.

The rest of the correspondence in the book is personal in character but it gives valuable glimpses of historical events, political policies and administrative measures. For example, a letter to Hakim Humam says that the news of Mirza Hakim's plans to take flight, received about the end of February 1581 had given great satisfaction to the Emperor, but Abu'l Fath himself welcomed war because he believed it would have exposed the duplicity of many disloyal men. About the proposed punishment of Shah Mansur in connection with intrigues against him, the same letter says that Akbar consulted not more than six to seven nobles, both Hindus and Muslims, who unanimously recommended that Shah Mansur be executed. Abu'l Fath, reminded the Emperor that he himself used to say that in times of war letters were often forged in the name of nobles of rival armies and not much reliance could be placed on them; but Akbar dismissed Hakim Abu'l Fath's suggestion with the remark that Shah Mansur's case was a different one.[3]

The letter also shows that the Iranis had to rely upon the Rajputs and the Afghans to recruit the required number of horsemen, and efforts were made to obtain suitable horses from the Punjab where they were cheaper than at Delhi.[4]

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[1] Chapter 14, verse 7.

[2] *Ruq'at i-Hakim Abu'l Fath*, pp. 84-90.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 13-14.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 16.

A letter dated 16 Safar 989/22 March 1581 says that a large body of yogis crowded round Akbar 40 miles from Lahore, and the Emperor escaped to the *pargana* of Desoha in Raja Bir Bal's *jagir* and spent the night there. The Emperor made it a rule that not less than one-quarter and not more than one-half of his bodyguard should always remain in attendance on him.[1]

A letter dated 9 Rabi' I 989/13th April 1581, to Hakim Humam, shows that Akbar did not approve of Shahbaz Khan Kamboh awarding *jagirs* and increasing the salaries of *mansabdars* during his absence and a harsh *farman* was sent to him expressing the Emperor's disapproval.[2] Another letter written after the above one to Hakim Human notes that Shaikh Ibrahim maintained law and order at Fathpur remarkably well. Shahbaz Khan Kamboh offered the Shaikh a *jagir* in Mahaban (Mathura) in order that he might stop the depredations of robbers there but Shaikh Ibrahim rejected it on the grounds that he could accept no *jagir* without His Majesty's order. Ultimately Shahbaz Khan appointed him the *karori* of Mahaban and his men rooted out theft and robbery from that region.[3] A letter to the Khan i-Khanan dated 23 Shauwal 995/26 September 1587 says that a majority of the *karoris* were asses; they were able to do nothing and their folly spoilt the administration, but punishing them severely would serve no purpose. This letter requests the Khan i-Khanan to persuade the Emperor to remit the *tamgha* (trade imposts) for it hindered the transit of cloth.[4]

The letters exhibit the close dependance of officers posted in different parts of the country on those who served at the Imperial court.[5] The success of administration depended upon their mutual co-operation and the new elite such as Hakim Abu'l Fath, Hakim Human Fathu'llah Shirazi, Abu'l Fazl, Faizi, Shaikh Farid Bukhari, Nizamu'd Din Ahmad, Khan i-Khanan, Sadr i-Jahan and a large number of others tried their best to work as a team.

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[1] *Ruqa't i-Hakim Abu'l Fath*, p. 23.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 34. [3] *Ibid*, p. 38. [4] *Ibid*, p. 95.
[5] *Ibid*, pp. 11, 119.

CHAPTER 9

RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL THINKING OF ABU'L FAZL

Religious Thinking

Abu'l Fazl did not write a book on religion or politics as such but he considered his introductory and concluding remarks about the events described in the *Akbar Nama* to be an independent contribution in their own right. He says:

> "In accordance with the demands of the situation many of the mysteries and subtleties of *hikmat*[1] have been inserted (in the *Akbar Nama*) at different places. Were these points of truth and reality separated from the main chronicle, they would form a choice book brimful of the marrow of wisdom."[2]

Such observations in the *Akbar Nama*, the *A'in i-Akbari* and the first two volumes of the *Mukatabat i-'Allami* are of far-reaching importance for a proper evaluation of Abu'l Fazl's political views, but their political nature has marred their reliability as a source for understanding his religious beliefs and thoughts. Only such works as his *Munajat*[3] and some notes in the third volume of the *Mukatabat*[1] are free from such political colouring.

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[1] The term *hikmat* or *hikma* is generally translated as "philosophy" but in medieval times it was used in a very wide sense to include philosophy, the sciences, medicine and mathematics. The word *hakim* is now translated as "physician," but medieval *hakims* were scientists, sages, medical practitioners and philosophers combined.

[2] *AN*, I, p. 369.

[3] Invocations to God, as opposed to obligatory prayers, were recognised by sufis to be one of the principal means of remembering and worshiping God. Khwaja 'Abdu'llah Ansary Harawi (1005-89) is very famous for his *Munajat* which is considered to be a masterpiece of Persian literature. In it he lays bare his souls and prays to God frankly and informally. The following extract from the *Munajat* exemplifies this type of literature:

> O God! Two pieces of iron are taken from one spot, one becomes a horse-shoe and one a King's mirror. O God! Since Thou hadst the Fire of Separation, why didst Thou raise up the Fire of Hell? O God! I fancied that I knew Thee, but now I have cast my fancies into the water. O God! I am helpless and dizzy; I neither know what I have, nor have what I know!"

Both these works tend to indicate that Abu'l Fazl draws heavily upon the Avicenian[2] peripatetic philosophy, the *ishraqi*[3] traditions of Iran and the thoughts of Ibn 'Arabi, which as we have shown in the first chapter, had between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries relegated the Arabic philosophy to the background. In addition to his earlier training in post-Avicenian philosophy and sufism obtained under his father, Abu'l Fazl had derived great benefit from his later contacts with *ishraqi* thinkers such as the Gilani brothers[4] and Hakim Fathu'llah Shirazi.[5] His studies of Zoroastrianism and Hindu theistic philosophy strengthened his belief in *ishraqi* thinking. He does not, however, make any original contribution to contemporary religious thinking and his main efforts are designed to harmonize and synthesize peripatetic and *ishraqi* ways of thought within the general framework of the spiritual and mystical philosophy of Ibn 'Arabi and the followers of his school of *Wahdat al-Wujud.*[6]

On the basis of the *Hashiya Sharh i-Matali* of 'Ali bin Muhammad Saiyid Sharif Jurjani[7] (1339-1413) he writes that the sole aim of learning and knowledge is to gain acquaintance with the Real Being and His Attributes. The seekers of this path are divided into two groups: one of them trying to achieve its object through mystic experience and esoteric knowledge; and the other trying to reach its goal through reason and logic. If the beliefs of members of the first group rest upon the teachings of the prophets they are known as sufis; otherwise they are called '*ishraqis.* If the members of the second group put their belief in prophets they are known as *mutakallimun,*[8] otherwise they are

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E.G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia,* II (Cambridge, 1964), p. 270.

In his *Tabaqatu's Sufiya,* a voluminous sufi biographical dictionary in Persian, the Khwaja quotes a number of *munajats* written by other sufis in Arabic and Persian. All are endowed with a charm of their own, but none surpasses Ansari's, which served as a model for all later scholars and sufis.

[1] *Supra,* pp. 305-306.

[2] *Supra,* pp. 10-14.

[3] *Supra,* pp. 39-42.

[4] *Supra,* p. 123-24.

[5] *Supra,* pp. 190-191.

[6] *Supra,* p. 34-37.

[7] *Supra,* p. 83-84.

[8] Scholars of scholastic theology of an atomistic type defending their beliefs by the sort of rational argument as used by the mutazilas.

called peripatetic philosophers.[1] Without committing himself to any of the above groups, Abu'l Fazl implores God to guide him along whatever path he thinks best.[2]

Likewise he does not feel he must reaffirm his belief in Islam or Prophet Muhammad and considers that a true spiritual life is the soul's dedication to God and not a neatly cut-and-dried set of beliefs and dogma. He strongly denounces *taqlid*[3] or blindly following the decisions of earlier religious authorities, and considers it a most narrow path and those engrossed in it as men plunged into darkness.[4] He thinks that there have been a number of personalities graced with spiritual perfection which has enabled them to remove all thoughts relating to anything other than God from their minds.[5] Although he does not name them, Abu'l Fazl considered prophets and eminent sages of different religions, to belong to this category.[6]

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[1] Riza Quli Khan Hidayat, known as Lala-Bashi (Educator in the Family of the Ruler), a celebrated nineteenth century Irani scholar (died 1871), makes the following division of the Spirituals in the Riyazu'l *'Arifin'* the *speculatives* (*ahl-enazar*) and the practitioners of spiritual experience (*ahl-e riyazat*). The former, if they follow the religion of Islam, are the *Mutakallimun* in general, if they do not, they are the philosophers known as Peripatetics (*Mashsha'un*). Similarly, those among the latter who keep the Law of the Prophet of Islam are called *Sufis* while those who do not adhere to the Law of the Prophet are the philosophers known as *Ishraqiyun*-- that is, the adepts of Suhrawardi's 'Oriental theosophy.' (Henry Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, English translation by Willard R. Trask, New York, 1954), p. 39 note 34.

[2] *MA*, III, p. 227.

[3] Adherence to the principles of one of the four schools of Sunni Jurisprudence, in legal terms is called *taqlid*. J. Schacht says, "The principle of *taqlid* in law has not been enforced in orthodox Islam without opposition, even in later generations there have been scholars who held that there must always be a *mujtahid*, like Ibn Daqiq al- 'Id (d. 702-1302) or al-Suyuti (d. 911-1505) or some who were inclined to claim for themselves unlimited *ijlihad*, like al-Juwaini (d. 478-1085)..." (*EI*, old, pp. 630-31).

[4] The *Munajat of Abu'l Fazl* edited by S. A. A. Rizvi (*Medieval India Quarterly*, Aligarh, I, Nos. 3 and 4, pp. 116-23, Introduction, pp. 1-37 text), pp. 4-5.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 29.

[6] This is the *ishraqi* tradition of Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi Magtul (Hosein Nasr in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, pp. 375-71). Some Indian sufis also believed in the existence of prophets in India (*Alakh Bani*, pp. 99-100)

He divides religious opinions into four categories in accordance with their holders' understanding about the final state of the soul after death. One group believes in resurrection;[1] another in transmigration of the soul;[2] a third thinks that after a fixed time the soul of the deceased is reborn in the same body;[3] and the fourth, whom he considers a group composed of disturbed minds avers that the human body is like grass.[4] He goes on to say that one group of people is happy in the hope of going to heaven, another is afflicted with the dread of hell. Some are contented with the impossible idea of obtaining divine vision.[5] Some are pleased with the idea of arriving, alighting and returning, i.e. transmigration of the soul. Another group is striving to improve its condition and conduct in order to earn divine satisfaction. Yet others think only of their present state, regardless of their future. A large number of people are busy bargaining to achieve bodily comfort. Abu'l Fazl does not mention that he inclines towards any of the above groups, and invokes God to grant him knowledge of Reality and guide him along the right path. Reverting to sufi ideals of heaven and hell, however, he says that people hold different views about the apparent form of heaven and hell but everyone is unanimous about the real form of heaven and hell,[6] and implores God to efface both from his sight and liberate his miserable heart from the thoughts of heaven and hell,[7] which to him amounts to commercial transactions. Fear of hell, he considers to be a real impediment to true prayer.[8]

[1] Muslims of all types.

[2] Hindus.

[3] Orthodox Muslims.

[4] Materialists.

[5] *Munajat.*

[6] Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyyah of Basra (*c.* 713 or 717-801) was a very strong critic of worship viewed as a means for obtaining reward on being saved from heaven and suffering in hell. She urged that God should be worshipped irrespective of hope or fear. To sufis real heaven exists in realizing the unity that already exists between the worshipper and the worshipped. According to Ibn 'Arabi, heaven and hell are subjective states, not objective realities, "Hell is the realization of the individual 'self'; it is self-hood. Heaven is the realization of the essential unity of all things. There is no real difference between the two. If any, the difference is one of degree, not of kind." Affifi in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, I, p. 419).

[7] *Munajat*, p. 29.

[8] *Ibid*, p. 6.

He ridicules those who think that they can only worship God in mosques or temples; and denounces rich men who build places of worship in the hope that they will in this way achieve salvation.[1] Thus God he invokes is not a finite God created in faith who reveals himself to believers in the form conceived by their various faiths, thereby leading to perpetual religious tension and conflicting dogmas.[2] The infinite God of Abu'l Fazl's *Munajat* transcends the contradictions and objections of philosophers and the dogmatism of the ignorant. He reveals Himself to that seeker alone whose heart is all-receptive.[3] Abu'l Fazl regards the world view of orthodoxy in all religions as a jungle of perplexity and a pitfall for the ignorant and prays God to liberate him from the confusion caused by the formalists. He says:

> "O! Worshipped One of the dwellers in Ka'bah and monastery; O! Deity of the wanderers in the forest and lovers of seclusion; the heavenly beings have received no knowledge of Truth and the people inhabiting the earth have no acquaintance with gnosis. Wise men can do no better than to search, and jurists have recourse to nothing but discussion. In places of worship nothing but stones and walls can be seen, and mosques are nothing but centres of distress and disorder."[4]

Both Ibn 'Arabi, and Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi, whom Abu'l Fazl follows, were advocates of the need to understand all religious systems and viewpoints. Ibn 'Arabi was accused of even approving of the worship of stones and stars and other idols, but Professor Affifi, defending him says that Ibn 'Arabi's God "is not the ethical and personal God of the religion, but the essence of all that is worshipped and loved in all religions."

"God has ordained that ye shall worship naught but Him.[5] This is interpreted by Ibn 'Arabi to mean that God has decreed that nothing is actually worshipped except Him. This is an open admission of all kinds of worship, so long as the worshippers recognise God behind the external 'forms' of their gods."[6] Ibn

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[1] *Munajat*, p. 3.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 12.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 9.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 11.

[5] Affifi in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, I, p. 414.

[6] *Ibid*, p. 415.

'Arabi in his oft-quoted verses says:

> "My heart has become the receptacle of every 'form';
> It is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks.
> And a temple for idols, and pilgrims' Ka'bah,
> And the Tablets of the Torah, and the Book of the Qur'an."[1]

Likewise Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi Maqtul asserts that belief in God is commensurate with one's own wisdom and intelligence. Everyone thinks that he alone is correct and others are wrong. If he comes across anything which is contrary to his beliefs he does not bother to understand it but plunges into abusing others and calling them heretics.[2] Abu'l Fazl, who always passionately advocated the above principles, begins his *Munajat* with the remark:

> "O God! In whatever direction I turn, I find Thee manifested; at whatever particle I look, I find Thy Light. The *ka'bah* of clay points in one direction but the *qiblah* of the heart in all directions."[3]

In the same strain he wrote an inscription for a place of worship in Kashmir:

> "O God, in every temple I see that people seek Thee,
> in every language I hear spoken, people praise Thee!
> Polytheism and Islam run after Thee,
> Each religion says, "Thou art one, without equal."

If it be a mosque, people murmur the holy prayer, and if it be a Christian Church, people ring the bell from love to Thee.

> "Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister, and sometimes the mosque,
> But it is Thou Whom I search from temple to temple."[4]

Abu'l Fazl's *Munajat* shews his ardent faith in the absolute perfection of God and in His omnipotence. Although surrounded with incommunicable mystery, He as godhead makes it possible for His creatures to enter into fellowship with Himself through *munajat*[1] and not through the formal prayers of Islam, or for that matter of any other religion. Abu'l Fazl picks out several names from "His Most Beautiful Names,"[2] which according to Muslim belief number 99, the names of which he most frequently repeats being *al-Ilah* or *Allah* (God), *al-Samad* (the Impenetrable), *al-Rab* (the Lord), *al-Ahad* (the One), *al-Qadir* (the Powerful), *Zu'l Jalal* (the Lord of Majesty), *al-Rahman* (the Benefactor), *al-, Rahim* (the Merciful), *al Hadi* (the Guide), *al-Karim* (the Generous), *al-Hakim* (the Wise) and *al-Nur* (the Light).

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[1] From *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*, quoted by Affifi above, p. 414.

[2] *Majmua'i Asar Farsi Shaikh Ishraq*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Henry Corbin (Tehran-Paris, 1970), p. 288.

[3] *Munajat*, p. 1.

[4] *Maktubat 'Inayat Khan*, 'Abdu's Salam Collection (Aligarh University) f.104a; Blochmann, pp. LIV-LV.

Abu'l Fazl yearns to remain firm in the realm of *Tauhid* or *Wahdatu'l-Wujud*[3] (Unity of Being), as conceived by Ibn 'Arabi and his school of sufis. This demands the realization of an already existing union or oneness with the Reality,[4] which is the One and All but Abu'l Fazl mostly borrows from the concept of *Wajibu'l-Wujud* (Necessary Being) as understood by the *ishraqis*.[5] This differs from the concept of Being in the Peripatetic philosophy in so far as it derives its inspiration from intellectual illumination and the Quranic verses and does not concern itself with reasoning and arguments. According to Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi, the word *Qaiyyum*[6] (Self-subsisting) used in the Qur'an is identical with the concept of *Wajibu'l Wujud*. He is *Wajibu'l Wujud* for He subsists in Himself and no existence or attribute is comparable with Him. Again *Wajibu'l Wujud* is *Khair i-Mahaz* (Pure Good), which means that good and beneficial are identical, and nothing is more beneficial than *Wajibu'l Wujud*.[7] Anything that can be conceived as contrary to Good is non existent. Abu'l Fazl says that Pure Good is the essence of Divine Majesty and unmixed evil is inconceivable. Good and evil do not exist in equal degrees, therefore the question of the coming into being of absolute evil does not arise. The absolute good is inherent in whatever He created.[1] It is an *ishraqi* exegesis of the, Quranic verse "every good which comes to you comes from God, every ill which comes to you comes from you," involving a total rejection of the existence of evil.[2] The *Akhlaq i-Nasiri*, upon which Abu'l Fazl relied very heavily, also says:

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[1] *Munajat*, pp. 7-8.

[2] al-Asma' al-Husna(*EI*, I, new, pp. 714-16).

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Toshihiko Izutsu, *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism* (Tokyo, 1966), pp. 77, 255.

[5] *Majmu' i-Asar Farsi Shaikh Ishraq*, pp. 390-92.

[6] "Allah—there is no God but He, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by whom all subsist..." Chapter 2, 255.

[7] *Majmu i-Asar Farsi Shaikh Ishraq*, pp. 39, 60, 132, 141, 381.

> "Now, divine acts are Pure Good, and whenever an act is Pure Good, its agent does not perform it for any other purpose than the act itself; for Pure Good is an end sought for itself and intended for its own sake, and that which is an end—particularly where such an end be highly valued—does not exist for the sake of anything other. Therefore, Man's actions, when they all become divine and pure, proceed from the very pith and reality of his essence, which is the Divine Intelligence; the other promptings of the bodily nature, the accidentals of both the Bestial and the Savage Soul, and the imaginative accidentals arising from both souls from the promptings of the sensory soul—all these are exercised within him."[3]

Shabistari in the *Gulshan i-Raz* and Jami in the *Lawa'ih* are the sufi poets who voice the above theory most expressively. Shabistari says:

> "Know that God Most High created it,
> And whatever comes from God is good.
> Being is purely good in whatever it be,
> If it also contains evil, that proceeds from 'other,'
> If the Musulman but knew what is faith,
> He would see that faith is idol-worship.
> If the polytheist only knew what idols are,
> How would he be wrong in his religion?
> He sees in idols naught but the visible creature,
> And that is the reason that he is legally a heathen."[4]

Defining Being qua Being as Pure Good, Jami says that "whenever it seems to us that something existent contains evil, that is owing to the lack of something else which ought to exist, and not to the really existing Being, qua Being."[1]

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[1] *MA*, III, pp. 268-69.

[2] *Majmu 'i-Asar Farsi Shaikh Ishraq*, pp. 101-102, 165-66.

[3] G. M. Wickens, *The Nasirean Ethics* by Nasiru'd Din Tusi (London, 1964), p. 67.

[4] E.H. Whinfield, *Gulshan i-Raz* of Shabistari (London, 1880), p. 84.

Invoking God, Abu'l Fazl says that nothing but good emerges from Pure Good, and Human beings, who have little control over their actions, can hope to achieve nothing by themselves. Even worrying about the ultimate result of their actions is undesirable.[2] In the preface to one of his *Kachkuls*,[3] he writes:

> "God forbid, that Evil should find its way in the divine picture gallery of creation! Evil sleeps in the dormitory of non-existence (*'adam*). What makes garments of existence (*wujud*) from the veils of the invisible (*ghayb*) is Pure Good. How can the Bestower of life and Adorner of the World, who creates nothing containing good and evil in equal degrees, create unmixed evil? It should therefore be known that good and evil in equal degrees as well as predominant evil, like unmixed evil, are non-existent. They belong to the category called "impossible being" (*mumtani-'wujud*).[4] The calamities and afflictions faced by past sages, and those being faced by modern ones, are outwardly confusing to everyone; but in fact they are great gifts from the Distributor of justice and Creator of world."[5]

The above view does not question God's Omnipotence but reiterates the incompatibility of evil with the belief in God as Absolute Good. Since God does not need evil He does not create it; it exists only in the negative sense, and not as something positive. It is a state of being estranged from the reception of divine mercy in its perfect form. This standpoint is compatible with that of Ibn 'Arabi, too, who considers "good" and "bad" as a matter of relative viewpoints. He says:

> "The dung-beetle finds repulsive the odour of rose, which, in reality, is a sweet fragrance. For the dung-beetle, a rose does not emit a sweet smell. Likewise, a man who is like a dung-

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[1] E.H., Whinfield, *Lawa'ih*, English translation in *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 37-38.

[2] *Munajat*, pp. 12-31.

[3] Literally a beggar's cup or bowl—here it is used in the sense of a notebook of miscellaneous writings.

[4] Following Avicenna, Muslim scholars divide reality into Necessary Being (*Wajibu'l-wujud*), possible being (*munkinu'l-wujud*) and being that is impossible (*mumtani'u'l-wujud*).

[5] *MA*, III, pp. 268-69.

> beetle in his nature and inner constitution, finds truth repulsive and is pleased with vanity."[1]

'Abdu'l Karim al-Jili (1365-1428), the celebrated author of *Al-Insan al-Kamil* and a follower of Ibn 'Arabi's school of thought, is more explicit:

> "Evil, as such, does not exist, although it has its appointed place in the world of opposites. What we call evil is really the relation of some parts and aspects of the whole to other parts and aspects; in a word, all imperfection arises from our not looking at things *sub specie unitatis*. Sin is not evil except in so far as we judge it to be forbidden by God."[2]

Postulating the theory that Necessary Being is at once Good and primordial Love, Abu'l Fazl goes on to affirm that the state of non-existence (*'adam*) is the realm of Unity and the abode of peace. It was the Divine Will which was responsible for bringing into being plurality of existence, a source of perplexity to men, and a habitat of evil. He therefore implores the Divine Mercy to make the heart of a seeker the mirror of His Beauty rather than a cause of veiling and separation.[3] He further begs God not to entangle him in the material world and to bestow upon him gifts from the domain of spirituality.[4] He finds wisdom and knowledge of no avail unless he is allowed entry to His Court and is made acquainted with divine mysteries. Thus, were He able to convert eight heavens into 80,000 and to bestow them upon one of His lovers, they would be worthless to him unless the divine mysteries were unveiled.[5]

According to Abu'l Fazl, God's majesty and power is not reflected through His justice, for it is impossible to understand His mysteries unless He Himself guides the seeker. Thus if He were to make the worshippers and ascetics who worship and pray day in and day out, suffer perpetual punishment, it would be justified; but if He were to fulfil the wishes of the most obstinate sinners it would be exercising His grace.[6] Guidance along the straight way of the Lord is dependent upon divine mercy which sufis such as Ibn 'Arabi thought to be nothing other than the process of the "self-manifestation of the Absolute."[1]

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[1] *Fususu'l Hikam*, edited by Affifi (Cairo, 1946), p. 179.

[2] *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, pp. 100-01.

[3] *Munajat*, pp. 27-28.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 19.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 24.

[6] *Ibid*, p. 8.

Keenly aware of his sinfulness, 'Abu'l Fazl makes sin and forgiveness the recurring theme of his *Munajat.* A sense of sin and self-abasement do not prevent him from placing optimistic trust in the efficacy of God's grace and forgiving mercy. Those who lose hope in God's forgiveness, he believes to be as miserable. He finds the view of the jurists, that sins are committed by human being themselves and are not created by God[2] incompatible with Divine Mercy. He asserts that he cannot look upon God from that viewpoint, and prays:

> "O Lord! A desolate heart stands in need of no apology, for no revenue can be raised from a barren village. O Refuge of distressed one! Thy love has reduced me to such a miserable plight that there is no room left for my own wishes and troubles!"[3]

He states that neither worshippers nor sinners are aware of the divine mystery. Worshippers are proud of their worship, but sinners find solace in begging. He then adds the following verses:

> "A devotee does not commit sins for he thinks Thee wrathful, (*Qahhar*),
> We are engrossed in sin for we thinks Thee forgiving (*Ghaffar*),
> He invokes Thee as wrathful and I as forgiving,
> O God! what name pleases Thee most?"[4]

Abu'l Fazl therefore implores God to honour the virtuous for performing good deeds and to be gracious to the wicked because He is merciful. He seeks forgiveness, for he believes that God stands in need of nobody's worship and that sins do not harm him.[5]

Abu'l Fazl believed that God's love and mercy are not shown only in His merciful provision for the needs of all but in His tender forbearance towards men in their follies and errors. He is constantly obsessed by gloomy fears and tormented by the thought of straying from the path of devotion (*'ubudiyat*).

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[1] Affifi in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, I, p. 411.

[2] *Munajat* p. 34.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 31, 34.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 36.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 35.

> "Although I have committed sins, I was intending to worship Thee. The mediator of our affairs is the heart, trace the origin of our actions to it. Pay no attention to what the body does, for it is in conflict with the spirit."[1]

Lastly He prays to God not to abandon mercy and compassion if he commits sins because of his folly and ignorance.

To Abu'l Fazl, *riza* (Divine Satisfaction) and *tawakkul* (Trust in God) are the *sine qua non* of a religious life. In an attempt to seek *riza,* the seeker no longer finds his own personality or power sufficient, and is satisfied that God should dominate his life. Invoking God as the Granter of wishes, Abu'l Fazl says:

> "Everybody begs for something from the court of Thy Almightiness but I yearn that Thou shouldst be satisfied with me. Keep me firm on the highway of Thy satisfaction (*riza*), and protect my life and heart from mistakes in the material world."[2]

Abu'l Fazl's trust in God is based upon his belief that creatures can never attain enough knowledge of the Creator even to be able to praise Him. As the most eloquent orator cannot utter a single word commensurate with the divine majesty and gift of grace, he questions how someone as base and feeble as himself can praise Him.[3] He does not invoke God for fulfilment of his needs, for this God grants, even before His slaves pray for it. Abu'l Fazl found himself on the horns of a dilemma, for if he cried out before the divine court it would amount to madness, and if he kept quiet it could mean indifference on his part. Nevertheless he recommends men to call upon God, for begging before the divine court affords special pleasure and satisfaction.[4]

Underlying Abu'l Fazl's *Munajat* and the *Mukatabat* is the theme that the quests for divine illumination and intellectual accomplishments are not mutually exclusive, and that the ideal religious life consists in making good the deficiency in human reason by resigning one's self to the divine will.

[1] *Munajat*, p. 23. [2] *Ibid*, p. 5. [3] *Ibid*, p. 2. [4] *Ibid*, p. 5.

Abu'l Fazl consistently applies to relations with his fellow men the theory that whatever comes from God is good. He conceives of only two possible attitudes towards men: the minimum duty is to be at "peace with all," and the ideal to be loving towards all. The genesis of this view can be traced back to the sufi view that man is created in the image of God.[1] Thus to Abu'l Fazl a good life does not consist of prayer and invocation alone, but demands an attitude of universal concord (*sulh kul*) and service to the whole of mankind irrespective of religious and sectarian differences. "Universal concord" removes strife and discord, and is a real antidote against egoism. However, Abu'l Fazl admits that it is not easy to attain; it entails control of the animal soul which governs the body, and the commanding soul which prompts submission to the passions.[2]

The habit of reconciliation with others and "knitting together of hearts," Abu'l Fazl states, should be inculcated in the days of one's own prosperity.[3] To him "universal concord" was not a political necessity but a religious belief, and he considers its attainment a divine blessing. He divides mankind into four categories. In the highest category are those who do not regard divine mercy as being confined to any particular group. In the second category are those who are friendly to their enemies as well as their friends. To the third category belong those who, although they do not love everybody, surrender themselves to the divine will. In the fourth category are those who, although believing that divine mercy is confined to only one group, do not contradict and curse those who hold different views.[4]

In the introduction to one of his *bayazs*,[5] Abu'l Fazl asserts that it was the principle of universal concord which enabled him to enjoy the benefits of a retired spiritual life while yet living amidst crowds of men. However he sought to obtain for himself

[1] Nicholson says, "The Jewish tradition that God created Adam in His own image reappeared as a *hadis* (saying of the Prophet) and was put to strange uses by Muhammedan theosophists." (*Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, p. 79).

[2] *MA*, II, p. 126, Letter to the Khani-Khanan.

[3] *AN*, III, p. 444; Bev, III, p. 666.

[4] *MA*, III, p. 226.

[5] A note-book. Medieval Muslim intellectuals made miscellaneous collections of excerpts and verses, and kept notes of their own recollections and impressions in separate note books.

a permanent abode in the stage of "love for all," which according to him was identical with the stage of obtaining God's satisfaction (*riza*).[1]

Abu'l Fazl's view about "universal concord" and "love for all" are a logical extension of Ibn 'Arabi's interpretations of man as a microcosm,[2] capable of becoming God's vice-gerent over His creatures and with the potential of becoming a sage or a Perfect Man.[3] He is able to reach a stage where no veils intervene between him and God, a stage of the highest possible felicity which no other creature is able to obtain. To Abu'l Fazl love of mankind is both divine worship and a sure key to understanding the real significance of goodness and beauty. To achieve an ideal social or political system, it is imperative to create conditions in which man is not removed from good and is able to combine obedience to God's will with faith and complete trust in His omnipotence.

Political Thinking

Abu'l Fazl's political thinking is closely linked with his religious views on God, and seeks to vindicate man's right to an orderly life and to seek goodness and happiness. It reiterates the Iranian theory of kingship, which is equally acceptable to the apologists for the Sultanate who believe that faith and kingship are interdependent.[4] Ardashir Babak, for example, is said to have observed, "Religion and kingship are twins, neither being complete without the other."[5] Similarly Ghazali, in trying to prove that the quality imperative for kings is correct religion, says "monarchy and religion are like brothers."[6] By correct religion Ghazali means Sunni Islam, but with Abu'l Fazl, religion stands for a life dedicated to God and service to mankind. In his attempt to follow *ishraqi* ideologies consistently, he increasingly relies upon the Avicennian legacy of the harmonization of the political philosophy of Plato with Islam and the *shari'a*[7] but he avoids taking issue with the political teachings of Ghazali and Nizamu'l Mulk Tusi.[1]

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[1] *MA*, III, p. 231.

[2] *The Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism*, pp. 214-25.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 237-52.

[4] *Ghazalis Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 59.

[5] *The Book of Government*, pp. 62-63.

[6] *Ghazalis Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 59.

[7] I.E.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 154-56.

Although he does not mention his sources, Abu'l Fazl's political thinking is based upon works in the following groups:

1. "Mirrors for Princes,"[2] the *Shah Nama* of Firdausi and the books of counsel written by Ghazali, Nizamu'l Mulk Tusi and their imitators.
2. Works of Avicenna[3] and his interpreters such as Nasiru'd Din Tusi[4] and Jalalu'd-Din Dauwani.[5]
3. Histories of the Mongols, elaborating concepts of the divine origin of the imperial power.
4. Ancient Indian political thought based mainly on the *Dharmashastra* (The Laws of Manu), the *Mahabharata* and the *Kalila wa Dimna.*[6]

Varied as his sources are, Abu'l Fazl's main concern, to justify Akbar's policy and ambitions, has made his political thinking consistent. It is based on the Sasanid theory that rightful rulers are endowed with divine effulgence or *farr i-izidi.*[7] This theory accords both with Mongol traditions and is the ancient Indian ideal of kingship. About *farr i-izidi* Ghazali writes:

> "As you will hear in the Traditions, 'the *Sultan* is God's shadow on earth,' which means that he is high-ranking and the Lord's

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[1] E.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 38-43, 81-83.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 67-77.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 143-57.

[4] *Akhlaq i-Nasiri* translated into English by G. M. Wickens, *The Nasirean Ethics*.

[5] *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, pp. 210-24.

[6] *A'in*, III, pp. 113-14; Jarrett, III, pp. 274-77.

[7] *Counsel for Kings*, pp. 73-74. According to an anecdote in the above work it is expressed. "Intelligence, knowledge, sharpness of mind, ability to perceive things, perfect physique, literary taste, horsemanship, application to work, and courage; together with boldness, deliberation, good temper, impartiality towards the weak and strong, friendliness, magnanimity, maintaining tolerance and moderation, judgement and foresight in business, frequent reading of the reports of the early Muslims, and constant attention to the Biographies of the Kings and inquiry concerning the activities of the Kings of Old; because the present world is the continuation of the empire of the forerunners, who reigned and departed, each having a memory to his name and (acquiring) treasure in this life and the next," p. 74.

> delegate over his creatures. It must therefore be recognized that this kingship and the divine effulgence have been granted to them by God, and that they must accordingly be obeyed, loved and followed."[1]

Abu'l Fazl does not find any use for the theory of the Sultan's being God's shadow on earth,[2] which the Turkic and Afghan rulers in India unequivocally adopted to their own advantage. He bases his political theory on the concept of *farr i-izidi* believed to have been reserved for kings and imperial rulers. He says:

> "Kingship is a refulgence (*furugh*) from the Incomparable Distributor of justice (God) and a ray from the Sun, the illuminator of the universe, the index of the books of perfection and the receptacle of all virtues. The contemporary language calls it *farr i-izidi* (the divine effulgence), and the tongue of antiquity calls it *kiyan khura* (the sublime halo). It is communicated by God to the holy face (of the king) without the intermediate assistance of anyone; and men, in its presence, bend the forehead of praise towards the ground of submission. Again, many excellent qualities flow from the possession of this light."[3]

This exalted notion of sovereignty differs strongly from the Persian "Mirrors for Princes" of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which presuppose perpetual tension between the ruler and his subjects.

To Abu'l Fazl kingship is not a necessary evil,[4] for he asserts that no dignity is higher in the eyes of God than royalty. To him the semantic basis of the word *padshah* confirms the fact that a king is the source of stability and possession; *pad* signifying stability and possession, and *shah* denoting origin and lordship.[5] Shah is also a name given to one who surpasses his fellows, for example the use of word *shah* in compounds such as *shah-sawar*

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[1] *Counsel for Kings*, p. 45.

[2] *Fatawa i-Jahandari*, ff. 143a, 187a; Barani, *Tarikh i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 70, 75.

[3] *A'in*, I, p. 3 ; Blochmann, p. 3.

[4] The ancient Indian doctrine of *Matsyanyaya* (the analogy of the big fish eating up little fish), as indicated in the Santi Parva of the *Mahabharata*, considered kingship to be a regrettable but very necessary institution. J. W. Spellman, *Political Theory of Ancient India* (Oxford, 1964), p. 6.

[5] *A'in*, I, p. 3, Blochmann, p. 2.

(an excellent horseman) and *shah-rah* (king's highway). It is also a term applied to a bridegroom. Abu'l Fazl likens the world to a bride and says that by betrothing herself to the King and becoming his worshipper, she puts an end to all possibilities of tension between the ruler and his subjects.

In distinguishing true kings[1] from selfish rulers, Abu'l Fazl admits that both have in common a large treasury, a numerous army, clever servants, obedient subjects, an abundance of wise men, a multitude of skilful workmen, and a superfluity of means of enjoyment. But selfish rulers enjoy only temporary control over all this, while for true rulers these boons are everlasting and they have no need to fear their cessation; they can single-mindedly devote their energies to the suppression of cruelties and the promotion of good. The selfish ruler's concern with the external forms of royal power, on the other hand, is instrumental in increasing his vanity and gives rise to insecurity, strife and oppression.[2]

This distinction made by Abu'l Fazl corresponds to Nasiru'd-Din Tusi's division of the government into the Virtuous and the Deficient, which in its turn is based upon the Platonic concept of an ideal state as propounded by Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi (*c.* 870-950) in his *Kitab Ara Ahla'l Madinat al-Fazilah*[3] (Treatise on the Opinions of the Citizens of the Ideal State), *Kitabal-Siyasatal-Madaniyah*[4] (Book on Political Government or On the Government of the City State) and *Kitab Tahsil al-Sa'adah*[5]

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[1] *farman farma'i-haqiqi.*

[2] *A'in,* I, p. 3; Blochmann, p. 2.

[3] "This treatise, based in its political part on Plato's *Republic* and to a lesser extent on Aristotles *Nicomachean Ethics,* has a theological and metaphysical super-structure which draws on Plato's *Timaos* and on the pseudo-Aristotelian Theology", *Political Thought in Medieval Islam,* p. 124.

[4] "It expounds Al-Farabi's theory of the soul and especially of the intellect; the second half is devoted to a discussion of man and his perfection in the state." *Political Thought In Medieval Islam,* p. 125.

[5] This independent and mature work begins "with a statement on the two-fold happiness of man, which he can only attain in association with others in a nation or city-state. Happiness is the highest good, which is desired for its own sake; and political science teaches how man as a citizen of a state can attain his happiness in accordance with his natural disposition." *Political Thought in Medieval Islam,* p. 125.

(Book on Attaining Happiness). The purpose of the "Virtuous government" is the perfection of men leading to the attainment of felicity. It seeks to promote justice, treating subjects as friends, filling the City (government) with good while its lord keeps his appetites under control.

The purpose of the "Deficient Government" or Domination, is to enslave mankind leading to misery. Its chief revels in tyranny, treating his subjects as servants and slaves, filling the City with horror, and regarding himself at the beck and call of his own voluptuous appetites. Widespread good, Tusi goes on, consists of security, tranquillity, mutual affection, justice, continence, graciousness and loyalty; and the general evils are fear, disturbances, strife, tyranny, greed, severity, deceit, treachery, chicanery and detraction. As a Shi'ite, Tusi considers only the Imamate can be Virtuous Government;[1] but Abu'l Fazl, like Al-Farabi, asserts that an ideal ruler is one who strives only for the highest perfection and happiness. Both Farabi and Abu'l Fazl are at one with Plato in expounding the thesis that the ideal of a philosopher king is "to become like God so far as this is possible; and to become like God is to become righteous and holy and wise."[2] When Farabi talks of happiness and perfection, he is concerned with the happiness and perfection of Muslims alone, but Abu'l Fazl includes all men in his scope. His ideal ruler does not acquire perfection merely by being subservient to the *shari'a* as interpreted by the Sunni *'ulama* but is the Perfect Man (*Insanu'l Kamil*), endowed with a greater capacity to receive divine illumination than any of his contemporaries,[3] and capable of observing "the connection between spiritual and temporal things and preserving both of these high matters" in their proper place.[4] Abu'l Fazl's ideal ruler does not totally ignore the *Shari'a* but if implementing it in any case would prejudice the welfare and happiness of his subjects, he feels at liberty to disregard it.

Abu'l Fazl blends the political philosophy of Farabi with the mystic ideologies of Ibn 'Arabi and Jili for the justification of his theory that Akbar is the Perfect Man. He finds in Akbar all the characteristics of the *ra'is* (chief) of the Ideal State as conceived by Farabi. He prefaces his account of Akbar's success in crushing the rebellion by Khan Zaman and Bahadur Khan in 1567 with the remark:

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[1] *The Nasirean Ethics*, p. 192.
[2] *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, pp. 122-23.
[3] *The Nasirean Ethics*, p. 86.
[4] *AN*, III, p. 274.

> "Kingship is a gift of God, and is not bestowed till many thousand grand requisites have been gathered together in one individual. Lineage and wealth and the backing of a mob alone are not enough for this great position. It is clear to the wise that a few of the holy qualities (requisites) are magnanimity, lofty benevolence, wide capacity, abundant endurance, exalted understanding, innate graciousness, natural courage, justice, rectitude, strenuous labour, proper conduct, profound thoughtfulness, laudable overlooking (of offences) and acceptance of excuses. And with all those marks of perfection, a few of which are mentioned in detail in the ancient books of the mature philosophers[1] of old, so long as the subject of such encomium has not sufficient wisdom to overpower improper desires and unbecoming anger, he is not fit for this lofty office."[2]

Abu'l Fazl, notes with satisfaction that Akbar is "a fount of perfect qualities, and a mine of holy principles." Not only does he come up to the expectations of Farabi, but he fulfils the conditions laid down in the *Santi Parvan* of the *Mahabharata*.[3] Abu'l Fazl finds that Akbar also conforms to the standards set by Ibn 'Arabi for the Perfect Man according to which man is the only "existent" in the whole world of Being in whom all the Attributes and Names of the Absolute are manifested, and nearest to God is the Perfect Man. "Just as one and the same light," says Ibn 'Arabi, "is variously coloured as it passes through pieces of glass of various colours, the same Form of the Absolute is differently manifested in different men with different capacities."[4] The apostles, the prophets and the saints alone, in Ibn 'Arabi's view, are entitled to be called the real vicegerents of God and, as such, Perfect Men. By the sixteenth century, however, some sufis had come to believe that the kings were saints *par excellence* and so performed miracles like saints. Mushtaqi attributes several unbelievable miracles to Sultan Sikandar Lodi.[1]

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[1] *Namaha'i-hikmat.*

[2] *AN*, II, pp. 285; Bev, II, p. 421.

[3] *Political Theory of Ancient India*, pp. 14-15.

[4] *The Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism*, p. 238.

Abu'l Fazl, however, insists that Akbar is the Perfect Man both because of his benevolent nature and because he has been endowed with divine light. Akbar's descent from Alan-qo'a,[2] the mystical ancestress of the Mongols, provides Abu'l Fazl with a firm historical basis for justifying the divine foundation of the imperial power. The Mongols believed that after the death of her husband Dobun-mergen, Alan-qo'a conceived the progenitors of the *Nirun*[3] Mongols through the intervention of a ray of light. Abu'l Fazl makes the legend sound more ridiculous by adding to it his own invention that the day of Alan-qo'a's conception was the beginning of Akbar who, after passing through divers stages, was revealed to the world at large after issuing from the holy womb of his mother, Her Majesty Maryam-makani "for the accomplishment of things visible and invisible." He himself knew that the story was unacceptable, so after much mystical rigmarole, he concludes:

Verse

If you listen to the tale of Mary,
Believe the same of Alan-qo'a.[4]

However fantastic this legend may be, the Mughal rulers maintained their belief in divine light regulating the affairs of kingdom even after they had accepted Islam. Humayun, who reorganized his administration in accordance with popular traditions about the power inherent in the signs of the zodiac, imagined that the sun controlled the destinies of rulers and sultans. The Hindus, too, believed that the Sun governed the world by means of either a good or a bad king.[5] Some sufis interpreted the Sun as the "witness to the wisdom and the loving kindness of the Creator." Relying upon an old cosmological myth, Jili says: "the Sun in his heaven is like the heart in man—a mirror of the Deity; while the heart displays the sublime degrees of existence connoted by the name Allah, the Sun is the source and principle of the elemental world. Idris, Jesus, Solomon, David, and most of the prophets dwell in the heaven of the Sun; its ruling angel is Israfil."[1] These traditions seem to have helped Abu'l Fazl in convincing his contemporaries that Akbar was dependent upon the Sun and his sovereignty did not owe everything to Hindu or Islamic theories. In his *Munajat* he asks:

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[1] *WM*, pp. 35-37.
[2] *AN*, I, p. 64.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 64-65.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 65.
[5] *Political Theory of Ancient India*, p. 36.

> "O Bestower of Refulgence! What sort of light is this which Thou hast given to the world-illuminating Sun? What sort of benevolence has prompted Thee to depute the Great Luminary to educate the Great Khalifah? (Akbar)."

And then he prays:

> "Enlighten our eyes with a particle of that light and make our hearts rose gardens by the falling of one drop of that grace."[2]

Abu'l Fazl's attempt to glorify sovereignty by identifying it with the divine light or with the Sun is neither novel nor ingenious. Its special significance lies in the way in which he sets out to show how Akbar's far-sightedness and his splendid achievements are the true reflection of divine omnipotence, and entitle him to obedience. Before describing his young Emperor's victory over Hemu, Abu'l Fazl says:

> "The sum of the matter is: the Light-Increaser of Creation's workshop commits to the keeping of His own sublime Grace, the charge of the affairs whether in mass or in detail, of a nursling of light who shall have obtained deliverance from the darkness of creature-worship and have made his heart radiant by the splendour of the worship of God. He (that is to say, the Deity) does not distress him by narrowing his soul within external affairs, and He incorporates his aspirations with others which have not passed into the scope of his spiritual mind, and which cannot be comprehended by the world-spirit, and places them in the bosom of his Fortune. And having enthroned him

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[1] *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, p. 123.

[2] *Munajat*, p. 3. Compare Suhrawardi Maqtul who says, "All beings are the illumination (*ishraq*) of the Supreme Light which leaves its vicegerent in each domain, the sun in the heavens, fire among the elements, and the lordly light (*nur ispahbud*) in the human soul." (Hossein Nasr, is *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, I, p. 388.)

> in the kingdoms of the visible and invisible He makes him leader of armies temporal and spiritual...Accordingly the glorious status of His Majesty the Shahinshah has become impressed in thousands and thousands of instances on the minds of the recalcitrants of the desert of wandering, who once had connexion with the dominion which is conjoined with Eternity."[1]

To Abu'l Fazl, the appearance of a personality endowed with both spiritual and temporal powers—"Lord of the Age" or the Perfect Man—is an epoch-making event in history,[2] resulting in the appearance of conditions conducive to the establishment of a world empire or universal sovereignty. "The wise and judicious who understand the spirit of the age," he writes, "have said that if this inhabited world, which has been split up owing to the inattention of great souls, were under one able and just ruler of noble capacity, the dust of dissension would be assuredly laid and mortals find repose."[3] Akbar's conquests in Bihar, Orissa and Bengal prompt him to assert that in the past, sages and politicians recognised that the comfort of ordinary people is dependent upon one rule, one ruler, one guide, one aim and one thought.[4]

Abu'l Fazl's reliance on sufi terminology for the defence of an autocratic monarchy was designed to strike at the very root of the intellectual pretences and ambitions of the adventurers who tried to make religious and mystical beliefs about the Mahdi, and the consequences of the completion of one thousand years of Islam,[5] instruments for seizing power by force by taking them out of their true historical context. The political role of the Safavid order of the sufis founded by Safiu'd-Din (1252-1334) of Aradabil,[6] which culminated in the establishment of the ruling dynasty of the Safavids in Iran by Shah Isma'il Safavi (1501-24) was very well known. In India, the administrative changes and new political policy introduced by Akbar gave rise to considerable uneasiness among orthodox Muslims, and among those who had lost their political power and economic affluence. As early as 1573-74 many Indian sufis had started a movement to raise to the throne a Saiyid of the Punjab, a scion of the old Saiyid dynasty.[1] They let it be known that they had received direction from the soul of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani[2] (1077-1166) and that on the basis of their own mystic contemplation and inspiration they believed this to be a divine command. Many adventurers on the frontiers had begun collecting arms to wage a holy war. Some outstanding sufis, such as Shaikh Dawud,[3] were not misled by the propaganda, but the problem was of appalling dimensions. Akbar's military strength and political resourcefulness, and the unflinching loyalty of his new elites enabled him to overcome all crises but what really changed the emotional climate, and gained increasing solidarity and strength for the Mughal throne was the sufic ideology of the Perfect Man propounded by Abu'l Fazl which appealed both to Hindus and Muslims. A galaxy of poets, philosophers and other scholars co-operated with Abu'l Fazl in furthering this way of thought.[4] In his description of the year 987/1580 Badauni says:

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[1] *AN*, II, p. 34; Bev, II, p. 56.
[2] *Ibid*, II, p. 380; *Ibid*, III, p. 551.
[3] *Ibid*, III, p. 87; *Ibid*, p. 122.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 284; *Ibid*, p. 417.
[5] *Supra*, pp. 55-57, 353-55.
[6] E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 19-21.

> "In this year low and mean fellows, who pretended to be learned, but were in reality fools, demonstrated on the basis of false arguments, that His Majesty was the *Sahib i-Zaman* (Lord of the Age), who would remove all differences among the seventy-two sects[5] of Islam and the Hindus."[6]

[1] *MT*, III, pp. 35-36; Haig, pp. 58-59.

[2] The founder of the Qadiri order.

[3] *MT*, III, p. 36; Haig, p. 59.

[4] Among those mentioned by Badauni are Sharif Amuli, who is said to have based his theories on the writings of Mahmud of Basakhwan, and one Khawaja Maulana of Shiraz. The Shi'is quoted the following Ruba'i said to have been composed by Nasir i-Khusrau:

In 989, according to the decree of fate,
The stars from all sides shall meet together,
In the year of Leo, the month of Leo, the day of Leo,
The Lion of God will stand forth from behind the veil.

(*MT*, II, p. 287; Lowe, p. 295).

The most outstanding, however, was Shaikh Taju'd Din bin Zakariyya Ajodhani, an eminent disciple of Shaikh Aman Panipati (d. 1550). Badauni highly critical both of Shaikh Taju'd Din and Shaik Aman (*MT*, II, p. 258; Lowe, p. 265) but in Delhi and Agra they were very famous, and enjoyed a big following. Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq admires them for their knowledge of Ibn Arabi's thought as well as for their good nature (*AA*, pp. 241-43).

[5] Islam is believed to have been divided into 73 sects, 72 of which are regarded as condemned.

[6] *MT*, II, p. 287; Lowe, p. 295.

Many Muslim scholars tried to prove that Akbar was the Lord of the Age referred to in the mystical works they used as sources. Some brahmans had recourse to Sanskrit sources to prove that Akbar was an incarnation of Lord Krishna whose advent was promised in their sacred books. They predicted that the Lord of the Age would honour brahmans and cows and govern the earth with justice.[1] Abu'l Fazl would undoubtedly have found that these allegations were forgeries designed to win favour and personal gain, but since they constituted propaganda favourable to Akbar, he used them to further his political mission. He himself wrote:

> "Seven thousand years have elapsed during which the turmoil of indiscrimination had gone on increasing, and mischievous ignorance has confused all, high and low. On this day, which is the beginning of a new cycle (September 1572), is the marvellous Host (God) weaving as of yore various veils, or is He about to remove the screen barring admission, and to guide mankind to Truth's glorious mansion."[2]

Although Abu'l Fazl makes the basis of sovereignty and Akbar's right to it sound pompous and grandiloquent, he takes a wide view of the functions of a sovereign. The office of world-rule (*jahanbani*), according to him, is in reality guardianship, and rulers worship by restoring or maintaining the peace and stability of the world.[3] World-rulers deem the multiplicity of their duties a reason for increasing their prudence, and face hindrances and impediments to their plans boldly and with full confidence in divine grace.[4] The victories of the true sovereign are divine gifts, and those who bind themselves with him are exalted while rebels are overthrown by divine wrath.[5] No rebellion can succeed against a true king. A great fire, he argues, cannot be put out by a little water. Evil-doers and mischief-makers by their own actions invite ruin and destruction[6] and plunge with their "own hands the dagger of death unto their bosom."[7]

[1] *MT*, II, p. 326; Lowe, p. 336.
[2] *AN*, II, p. 380; Bev, II, p. 551.
[3] *Ibid*, II, p. 289; *Ibid*, II, p. 426.
[4] *Ibid*, III, p. 50; *Ibid*, III, p. 72.
[5] *Ibid*, III, p. 99; *Ibid*, III, p. 140.
[6] *Ibid*, II, p. 15; *Ibid*, II, p. 27.
[7] *Ibid*, II, p. 184; *Ibid*, II, p. 129.

Abu'l Fazl deems military operations and conquests inevitable for uprooting dissension and for the promotion of the "repose of mortals."[1] They help in extending the benefits of peace and prosperity to a larger segment of mankind. As an introduction to Akbar's Punjab expedition of 1585, he says:

> "Whoever receives a ray from the world-lighting sun, and who reads the inscription on his heart's portico, does not, without some heartfelt cause, abide in one place, but every now and then takes his pleasure in a new spot of delight...(Thus), in the first place the abode of empire is cleansed from the weeds and rubbish of disturbance by perambulations among the provinces, and direct knowledge is thereby obtained of the condition of things. Evil-doers sink into the abyss of failure, and good men acquire distinction. In the second place remote districts become swept and garnished as well as the home-farm of sovereignty, and are enlightened by the glory of justice."[2]

Like all Hindu and Muslim political thinkers, Abu'l Fazl regards justice as the foremost political virtue. Nizamu'l Mulk, for example, believes that kingship can endure where there is unbelief but not where there is injustice.[3] Then Ghazali records with approval the saying of Iranian sages: "Religion depends on the monarchy, the monarchy on the army, the army on supplies, supplies on prosperity, and prosperity on justice."[4] Abu'l Fazl, however, prefers to rely upon the *Akhlaq i-Nasiri*, and advocates the promotion of universal justice. According to the Muslim followers of Aristotle, justice is a psychical virtue and is first applied to one's own soul by adjusting one's natural faculties, and controlling one's appetite and impulses. Once a person has completed the adjustment of his soul, says Nasiru'd Din Tusi, "he is obliged to concern himself with the adjustment of friends and family and kin in like manner; then with the adjustment of strangers and distant persons; and finally, with the adjustment of animals, until the superiority of such a person over his fellow-men becomes apparent and his justice is fulfilled. The person who attains this limit in justice is God's Almighty friend, His vicegerent, and the best of His creation."[1]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 87; Bev, III, p. 122.

[2] *Ibid* p. 465; *Ibid*, III, p. 702.

[3] *The Book of Government*, p. 12, Ghazali also quotes it (*The Counsel for Kings*, p. 46).

[4] The *Counsel for Kings*, pp. 46, 59, 71.

With Abu'l Fazl, the proper development of far-seeing reason and forbearance are preconditions for the evolution of a broadly-based justice and are enforceable only by persons finding favour in God's sight. Such rulers are not swayed by narrow personal considerations and do not discriminate between friends and strangers in matters of justice.[2] In connection with the account of Akbar's execution of Khwaja Mu'azzam, his mother's half-brother, in punishment for his cruelties, he says:

> "It is a requisite of the high office of sovereignty that justice be administered to the oppressed without distinguishing between friend and foe, relative and stranger, and that it place retribution for tyranny in the collar of the tyrant, so that those connected with the sovereign, and those attached to the court may not make their relationship a means of oppression, and that if, which God forbid, any such event should occur out of infatuation, right-acting men may be under no apprehension in reporting the oppression, but may boldly bring it forward."[3]

The sort of justice Nasiru'd Din Tusi and Abu'l Fazl have in mind is not found even in angels: For Tusi it is the principal virtue of the Imam, and for Abu'l Fazl that of the Perfect Man. Its *sine qua non*, according to Abu'l Fazl, is *Sulh-Kul* (universal concord) which emerges from a paternal love towards his subject. "Thousands find rest in the love of the King; and sectarian differences do not raise the dust of strife."[4] He says categorically that "on coming to the exalted dignity (of sovereignty) if he does not inaugurate universal peace (toleration) and if he does not regard all conditions of humanity, and all sects of religion with the single eye of favour," he is not fit for the exalted dignity of kingship.[5] He notes with satisfaction that Akbar finds his own happiness in the contentment of his subjects, and his own joy in the peace of mankind.[1]

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[1] *The Nasirean Ethics*, p. 108.

[2] *AN*, II, p. 173; Bev, II, p. 268.

[3] *AN*, II, p. 216; *Ibid*, II, p. 334.

[4] *A'in*, I, p. 3; Blochmann, p. 3.

[5] *AN*, II, p. 285; Bev, II, p. 421.

Thus the theory of punishment advocated by Abu'l Fazl is not retributive, but is designed for the correction of offenders and the promotion of good and the happiness of mankind. He likens the king to a gardener, saying, "As gardeners adorn gardens with trees and move them from one place to another, and reject many, and irrigate others, and labour to rear them to a proper size, and extirpate bad trees, and lop off rotten branches and remove trees that are too large, and graft some upon others, and gather their various fruits and flowers, and enjoy their shade when necessary, and do other things which are established in the science of horticulture, so do just and far-seeing kings light the lamp of wisdom by regulating and instructing their servants, and so appear the standard of guidance."[2] The analogy of the gardener applies equally to the treatment of rebel leaders, religious heads hostile to the imperial policy, contumacious officers and ordinary offenders against law and order. He advocates harsh disciplinary measures in the case of serious political offences, but says that only rulers endowed with divine light can judge such offences. He advocates that capital punishment should be decreed in very rare circumstances, "for inquiring sages," he says, "consider the human form as an edifice made by God, and do not permit its destruction."[3]

In line with the *Akhlaq* works, he divides men into five categories according to their nature: The *most commendable person* is the sagacious man who prudently does that which is proper and absolutely necessary. He is not only himself good but his good is communicable, and he is the fittest person for a ruler to consult in state affairs. Secondly, there is the *man of good intentions* who is himself good but whose goodness is not communicable. Kindness and respect should be shown to him but he does not merit so high a degree of confidence. Thirdly comes the *simple man* who is neither good nor evil. He does not deserve any distinctions, but ought to be allowed to live at his ease. Nasiru'd Din recommends that he be encouraged to do good, so that to the extent of his aptitude, he may reach perfection. The *inconsiderate man* is evil, but his evil does not harm others. No active encouragement is to be given to him, but by good counselling and severe rebukes he should be forced to do good. Nasiru'd Din says that if he abandons his evil nature and is inclined to good, so much the better, but if not, he will remain in a contemptible and abject state. Fifthly, there is the *vicious man* whose misdeeds are a source of grief and confusion to others. The king should regard him as a leper, and keep him apart from the rest of mankind. Should he show no signs of improvement, he should then be banished from his dwellings. Should even this fail to improve him, he should either be blinded or have his hand or foot amputated. Both Abu'l Fazl and Nasiru'd Din advocate that capital punishment should be meted out only in very rare cases. Nasiru'd Din says that, "to ruin an edifice in which the Truth (mighty and exalted is He!) has manifested so many thousand operations of wisdom, in such a way that its repair and restoration become no longer possible —this is far removed from intelligence."[1]

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[1] *AN*, II, p. 289; Bev, II, p. 426.

[2] *AN*, II, p. 332; *Ibid*, II, p. 487. This theory has been adapted from the Hindu *Rajniti* as described by him in the *A'in*. He says:

> "A king resembles a gardener and should carry out, in regard to his subjects, the course pursued in the care of his garden by the other, who puts away thorns and weeds and keeps his flower-beds in good order, allowing no depredations from without...The gardener, likewise, from time to time, prunes the redundancy of leaf and branch on his trees, so the king should isolate from each other the more powerful nobles whose friends and dependents are dangerously numerous. The gardener also invigorates his weak saplings with water, and the king should similarly sustain with beneficene his impoverished soldiery." Jarrett, III, p. 275.

[3] *MA*, I, pp. 58-59; *A'in*, I, p. 5; Blochmann, p. 8; *AN*, II, p. 16; Bev, II, p. 29.

Like the Platonizing authors of the *Akhlaq* works, Abu'l Fazl likens the body politic to the animal constitution. Drawing upon the medical theories of the middle ages he argues that as the equilibrium of the animal constitution is dependent upon the equilibrium of elements, so the political constitution is made good-tempered by a judicious division of ranks. Each rank contributes to the prosperity of the "Ideal City" with goods and virtues. Dauwani, another follower of the same school, says, "as the equipoise of bodily temperament is effected by the intermixture and correspondence of four elements, the equipoise of the political temperament is to be sought in the correspondence of four classes." It follows that, as in any composite organisation, the passing of any element beyond its proper measure occasions the loss of equipoise and is followed by dissolution and ruin, so in the body politic, the domination of any one class over the other three upsets its adjustment and destroys its composition.[1]

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[1] *The Nasirean Ethics*, p. 231; *A'in*, I, p. 5; Blochmann, p. 8.

First in the list of four classes given by Abu'l Fazl, are the warriors, who in the political body have the nature of fire. Nasiru'd Din and Dauwani place them second in their lists. Tusi, who calls them "Men of the Sword," includes in this class, warriors, volunteers, skirmishers, frontier guards, sentries, valiant men, supporters of the realm and guardians of the state. All three liken them to fire, which according to them "consumes the straw and rubbish of rebellion and strife," and helps restore peace and order.[2]

Second in Abu'l Fazl's list are *artificers and merchants*. Both Nasiru'd Din Tusi and Dauwani place them third in their lists. Nasiru'd Din calls them men of negotiation, and says that they are the merchants who carry goods from one region to another, tradesmen, master craftsmen and tax-collectors "without whose co-operation the daily life of the species would be impossible." All three scholars identify them with the element of air. Abu'l Fazl says "From their labours and travels, God's gifts become universal, and the breeze of contentment nourishes the rose-tree of life."[3]

Third on Abu'l Fazl's list are "Men of the Pen" such as *hakim* (philosopher, *ishraqis* or peripatetics), physicians, arithmeticians, the geometricians and astronomers, who resemble water. "From their pen and their wisdom," he says "a river rises in the drought of the world, and the garden of the creation receives from their irrigating powers a peculiar freshness."[4] Nasiru'd Din and Dauwani also compare them with water, but they place them first and consider the prominent "Men of the Pen" to be *'alims*, gnostics (*arbab i-'ulum wa ma'arif), faqih*, (jurists, and *qazis*[5]) whom Abu'l Fazl omits altogether. In fact in the *ishraqi* traditions of Shaikh Shihabu'd-Din Suhrawardi, a *hakim*, as we have seen, is at once—an intellectual, rationalist, 'alim and gnostic and hence best suited to head the class of "Men of the Pen."

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[1] Jalalu'd Din Dauwani, *Akhlaq i- Jalali* (Lucknow, 1957), p.223.

[2] Blochmann, p. 4; *The Nasirean Ethics*, p. 230; *Akhlaq i-Jalali*.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 4.

[4] *Ibid*, p.4.

[5] *The Nasirean Ethics*, p. 230; *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, p. 220.

Fourthly come the husbandmen, who are given fourth place in the lists by all three scholars who see them as corresponding to earth. Abu'l Fazl says, "By their exertions, the staple of life is brought to perfection, and strength and happiness flow from their work."[1] Nasiru'd Din includes in his list the sowers, farmers, ploughmen and agriculturists "without whose help the survival of individuals would be out of the question."[2]

Nasiru'd Din goes on to say that according to the philosophers "the virtue of the cultivators is co-operation in labours; that of the merchants is co-operation in respect of possessions; the virtue of kings is co-operation in opinions and government; and that of metaphysicians is co-operation in true wisdoms."[3] Abu'l Fazl does not bring out this stress on co-operation but states that it is "obligatory for a king to put each of these in his proper place, and by uniting personal ability with due respect for others, to cause the world to flourish."[4] Concern with the supreme importance of the ruler leads Abu'l Fazl to belittle the traditional importance of the combination of "the men of the pen" and "the men of the sword" which was believed by many to have been instrumental in securing stability and peace in world. The assignment of third place to "the men of pen" was designed not only to minimise the importance of the 'alims, Jurists and *qazis*, but was also intended to ensure that the new class of elite, consisting of *hakims* and intellectuals, should not try to overrate their importance in the introduction of Akbar's new regulations. Abu'l Fazl writes of these regulations, "experienced men who are acquainted with the art of governing, and versed in the history of the past, cannot comprehend how monarchs have hitherto governed, without these wise regulations and how the garden of royalty could have been fresh and verdant, without being irrigated by this fountain of wisdom."[5] In fact the new *mansabdari* system had made the distinction between the men of the pen and the sword obsolete, for all officers of higher rank were mutually interdependent.

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[1] Blochmann, p. 4.
[2] *The Nasirean Ethics*, p. 230.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 230.
[4] Blochmann, p. 4.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 9.

Abu'l Fazl repeatedly lays stress on the fact that Akbar stood in no need of a minister to guide him, and that his laws were divinely inspired.[1] His vindication of Akbar's legislation draws upon the beliefs of Muslim philosophers such as Farabi and Ibn Ṣina, but Abu'l Fazl gives them a new orientation. According to the Muslim philosophers "prophecy alone provides the law for the good society in the ideal state."[2] By prophets they did not mean only the line of apostles and prophets which Muslims believed to have come to an end after Muhammad, but also Greek sages such as Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato.[3] Abu'l Fazl extends the list of the sages include even Akbar, whose main concern, according to him, was to legislate for the benefit of all sections of his subjects. In Ibn Sina's *Kitaba'l Isharat* and *Shifa* he sees the spirit of the Laws of Plato, who says that "the true statesman must think rightly about the ultimate things, God, man, and their relation to one another."[4] Thus Abu'l Fazl ignores the Islamic glossing of Plato's works designed to appeal to the orthodox Muslim sentiments. The state as envisaged by Abu'l Fazl stands for legislation based on the principles of *sulh-kul* (universal concord) and not on the Sunni *shari'a* alone.

The primacy of the divinely inspired ruler and the law does not, in his scheme of things, completely relegate the administrators and officers of the state to the background. He again compares the administrative frame-work with the animal constitution and adds that as the political body maintains its equilibrium through the four classes of men described above, the framework of government is preserved by four classes of officers.

At the top are the *nuwinan i-daulat* (the highest noblemen in the state) who correspond to the element of fire in the physical temperament. "Illuminating the battlefield with the halo of devotedness, they do not take their lives into account." At the head of this class is the *wakil*,[5] whose wisdom has enabled him to obtain the four degrees of devotion[6] (*chahar martaba i-ikhlas*) and thus become the Emperor's lieutenant in all matters connected with the realm and the household. He is the principal counsellor and regulates appointments, promotions, demotions and dismissals. Besides possessing all the qualities of head and heart, he should be a man of forbearance and wide tolerance (*sulh-kul*). Although the financial officers are not under his immediate control, he receives the returns from the heads of all financial departments, and keeps abstract of their returns. "The *mir-mal*,[1] the keeper of the seal, the *mir bakhshi*,[2] the *barbegi*,[3] the *qurbegi*,[4] the *mir tuzak*,[5] the *mir-bahri*,[6] the *mir-barr*,[7] the *mir-manzil*,[8] the *khwansalar*,[9] the *munshi*,[10] the *qushbegi*,[11] and the *akhta-begi*[12] belong to this class.

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[1] One of the Emperor's remarks emphasises the same fact.

[2] *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, pp. 128, 144, 150, 183.

[3] The *Ishraqis* also advocated the same theory.

[4] *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, p. 147.

[5] Prime Minister, *See* list of *Wakils* from the time of Babur to Shah Jahan in *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, p. 140.

[6] *Infra*, pp. 396-99; Blochmann interprets them to mean the Divine Faith or Din Ilahi.

The *auliya i-nusrat*[13] (the fathers of assistance) in administrating resemble the wind, at times a heart-rejoicing breeze, at other times a hot, pestilential blast. This group is composed of the tax collectors and those in charge of income and expenditure, and are headed by the vizier, or *diwan*. As the Emperor's lieutenant in financial matters, the *auliya i-nusrat* must be perfect in book-keeping and accounts, "free from avarice, circumspect, warm-hearted, abstitnent, active in business, pleasing in his style, clear in his writings, truthful, a man of integrity, condescending, and zealous in his works." The *mustaufi*,[14] the *sahib i-tawjih*,[15] the *awarja-nawis*,[16] the *mir-saman*,[17] the *nazir i-buyutat*,[18] the *diwan*

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[1] In charge of the Emperor's private purse.

[2] Paymaster of the Court.

[3] An officer who presents people at Court, together with their petitions etc.

[4] Bearer of the Imperial Insignia.

[5] Master of Ceremonies.

[6] Incharge of ferries.

[7] Superintendent of the Imperial Forests.

[8] Quartermaster-General of the Court.

[9] Superintendent of the Imperial Kitchen.

[10] Private Secretary.

[11] Superintendent of the Aviaries (falcons, pigeons.)

[12] Superintendent of the Stud.

[13] Blochmann, p. 6.

[14] Auditor.

[15] The Army Accountant.

[16] The Accountant in charge of daily expenditure at Court.

[17] The Officer in charge of the Court furniture, stores etc.

[18] Superintendent of the Imperial Workshops.

i-buyutat,[1] the *mushrif*[2] of the treasury, and the *waqi'a nawis*[3] and the *'amils*[4] of the *khalisa*[5] are controlled by the *diwan*. The *diwan* helps the *mustaufi* in all complex matters, and seeks the advice of the *wakil* in matters which are too difficult for him to follow.

The third group are the *ashab i-suhbat* (the companion of the king) representing water in the affairs of the body political. They are sharp-sighted, experienced, and are endowed with an expert knowledge of human nature and of the times. If they are moderate in their views and dealings, they contribute to peace and prosperity, but if they depart from moderation they "inundate the world with a deluge of calamity." At the head of this class is the *hakim* (Muslim philosopher, whether *ishraqi* or peripatetic), whose wisdom provides a sound ideological basis for the welfare of mankind. In this list, Abu'l Fazl ignores the 'ulama who, according to jurists and even to Dauwani, are the principal guides of the state.[6] The *hakims* and counsellors whom Abu'l Fazl extols are not the *nadims* or boon companion of the *Siyasat Nama*.[7] Akbar, being a Perfect Man, does not, however, need much counselling, although Abu'l Fazl himself describes several meetings for consultation held by Akbar.[8] Among the officers belonging to *ashab i-suhbat* are the *sadr*, the *mir-'adl*, the *qazi*, the physician, the astronomer, the poet and the soothsayer.[9]

Abu'l Fazl lays great stress on the fact that all important officers, including princes, should appoint wise counsellors of their own choice, but demands much of such counsellors. They should be selfless and men of experience, and should bring home the truth to their master with discretion.[10] They should not indulge in flattery[11] and should always give priority to the furtherance of the imperial policy even over the interests of their master.[12] None but a *hakim*, according to Abu'l Fazl, is capable of such onerous responsibility.

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[1] The Accountant of the Imperial Workshops.

[2] The Accountant. [3] The Recorder. [4] The Collector.

[5] Lands and sources of revenue reserved for the imperial treasury.

[6] *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, pp. 220-21.

[7] *The Book of Government*, pp. 92-94.

[8] *Infra*, pp. 456-58.

[9] Blochmann, p. 7.

[10] *MA*, II, Letter to Daniyal, p. 81.

[11] *MA*, II, pp. 194-95; Letter to Raja Man Singh.

[12] *AN*, III, p. 342; Bev, III, p. 501.

In the fourth category, corresponding to earth, are the king's personal attendants. "If free from chaff and dross, they are like an elixir for the body; otherwise they are dust and dirt upon the face of success."

According to Abu'l Fazl, no administrative framework can succeed without the proper co-ordination of the different categories of state servants ensuring equilibrium among them. He adds "Whatever can be done by words should not be done by the sword, and whatever can be done by the courage of officers of middling or lower rank should not have to be done by great ministers."[1]

In order to increase the standing of the imperial service, Abu'l Fazl reiterates that real eminence is to be obtained by serving Akbar, which in his opinion is superior to following the ascetic and meditative life of a sufi. In support of his thesis, he quotes an anecdote attributed to the great sufi, Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Daula Simnani. This tells how the eminent Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Daula Simnani was a vizier when he was young[2] but that, under the spell of mystic ecstasy, he resigned and for forty long years practised unimaginably hard ascetic exercises. Then, at the end of his life, he saw in a vision that the day of judgment had arrived and people were being asked to account for their conduct in this world. In the Shaikh's case the divine command was issued that all his prayers and ascetic exercises should be weighed on the scales against the merit he had acquired by a kindness done to an old woman when vizier. When this was done, that single act emerged heavier, making the great Shaikh lament that he had not continued as vizier doing good to people. Asceticism, Abu'l Fazl goes on to say, helps only the individual who performs it, but service enables one to help a great multitude.[3]

Ideally, according to Abu'l Fazl, service should consist of loyalty to the Emperor and of selflessness. He divides the loyal into two classes. Firstly, there are those who choose single-heartedness (*yakta'i*) for their own gain and promote their own interests through loyalty. Although they are somewhat superior to mercenaries, wise men do not regard them as purely single-hearted. The second class is that of the noble truth-seekers "who keep their altruistic hearts filled with the light of love, and submit to the leadership of those who are pre-eminent among the chosen ones of the Creator." He adds that this class achieves success without making any effort.[1]

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[1] Blochmann, p. 9; *MA*, pp. 58-59.

[2] Shaikh 'Ala'u'd Daula Simnani was born at Simnan in 1261 and entered the government service at the age of fifteen. Under Arghun (1284-91) his father rose to the governorship of Baghdad and the whole of Iraq, his paternal uncle became a vizier, and his maternal uncle was principal *qazi*. in 1281 'Ala'u'd Daula had a vision but continued in service until 1286, resigning after a visit to Simnan when on leave.

[3] *MA*, II, p. 180; Letter to Qasim Khan Tabrizi.

Loyalty, to Abu'l Fazl, was the source of innumerable benefits. Disloyalty and hypocrisy were the worst of faults, and no one possessing them could expect loyalty and sincerity from his own men.[2] Loyal servants could never be cruel and oppressive, and they introduced talented men to the Court for the furtherance of the imperial interest. The four degrees of devotion, which we shall discuss in the next chapter, were the *sine qua non* of service to Abu'l Fazl, and provided the main basis of the ideal administrative framework.

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[1] *AN*, III, pp. 449-50; Bev, III, p. 675.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 291; Bev, III, p. 428; *AN*, II, p. 294; Bev, II, p. 556.

CHAPTER 10

THE DIN ILAHI

The Din Ilahi, the religion said to have been invented by Akbar has always been a subject of great controversy amongst scholars evoking as much interest today as it did in Akbar's time. The questions generally asked now, as then, are:

1. Was Akbar a heretic or apostate from Islam?
2. What is the nature and form of Akbar's religion?

Professor 'Aziz Ahmad, has entitled a chapter of a recent work "Akbar: Heretic or Apostate";[1] gives a summary of some contemporary and modern works on the subject but leaves the enigma unsolved.

Professor Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, says, "Some, mostly depending upon Badauni, have reached the conclusion that he [Akbar] abjured Islam completely and invented a new religion of his own; others have held that Akbar remained a Muslim and that his deviation from the faith of his forefathers was not serious."[2] He adds that "He [Akbar] did not ask his followers to abjure Islam as has been wrongly asserted by some writers; but he did ask them to abjure the orthodox form of it.

[1] 'Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 166-181. Admitting that Islam did not recognise any priesthood, Prof. Holt says, the "ulama (the religious scholars) and the leaders of the Sufi orders (two groups at some times and in some places closely interconnected have often played a part in Muslim societies anologous to that of clergy amongst Christians." He, however, adds, "The absence of a sacerdotal hierarchy, or of any conciliar system, to define the faith, linked with the primacy ascribed to orthopraxy, has made Islam more tolerant of variations of belief than Christianity. It is in general true to say that heresy (to use a term not quite appropriate in Islam) has been repressed only when it has been manifested as political subversion; it is also true to say that, since Islam is both a religious and a political community, the distinction between religious and political dissent is not clear cut." P.M. Holt, introduction to the *Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge, 1970), I, p. XIII.

[2] *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent,* p. 145.

However, what Akbar was willing to retain of Islam in the composition of his religious conviction was merely a parody of it even though Akbar did not think so; and this was the most dangerous aspect of the situation, because it is not easy to seduce people from their allegiance to their faith, but if that faith is so diluted with other religions that it loses its basic character, then it is sure to die out in course of time."[1]

Professor Qureshi had earlier made the point more clearly in a collective work, *A History of the Freedom Movement in Pakistan* (Vol. I):

> "Even more disastrous was the encouragement of the feeling that tolerance implied the belief that all religions were merely different paths, all equally good, of reaching the same God. This was even more potent a cause of the demoralisation and degeneration of the Muslims, especially of their acceptance of subtle non-Islamic ideas. Indeed this was the darkest period in the history of Indian Islam."[2]

Professor Fazlu'r Rahman, who was the Director of the Islamic Research Institute Karachi for some years up to 1966, says:

> "The first Islamic crisis in India came to a head during the reign of Akbar, who, partly through political motives, but largely on the basis of his personal religious views and experiences and helped intellectually and encouraged by the two brothers, Abu'l Fadl and Faydi . . . . , formulated and inaugurated a new eclectic religion, the Din i-Ilahi, which assigned to him the prerogative of an absolute *Mujtahid.* The new religion perished in the bud—rejected equally by Hindus and Muslims . . . ."[3]

Professor Rahman believes that Hindu pantheistic influences led Akbar to proclaim a syncretic religion (Din i-Ilahī) and to impose it as the state religion.[4]

Shaikh Muhammad Ikram and Professor S. A. Rashid, two Pakistani scholars, write: "Akbar did not claim to be a prophet or establish a new religion. Islam, however, lost its position of privilege, and many of Akbar's practices and regulations differed widely from the normal Muslim practices. It should, therefore, cause no surprise if due to these innovations and particularly on account of the coloured and exaggerated versions which gained currency, he was, and is, widely regarded as having gone outside the pale of Islam."[1]

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[1] *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent*, pp. 147-48.

[2] *A History of Freedom Movement*, p. 32.

[3] Fazlu'r Rahman, *Islam* (London, 1966), pp. 201-02.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 148.

Professor Muhammad Mujib concludes his evaluation of Akbar's religion with the remark, "On the other hand, it is quite clear that intellectually and to some extent politically Akbar rejected the Muslim orthodoxy of his day. In practice he did not go beyond refusing to be a partisan of the 'ulama of the court, and promulgating the few decrees that we have mentioned above."[2]

Some eminent Hindu scholars[3] have tried to prove Akbar a liberal Muslim; Western scholars, following the lead given by the Jesuit Fathers[4] and such nineteenth century scholars as Rehatsek[5] (1819-91), Blochmann[6] (1838-78)), and the Count Von Noer (1830-81) regard him as having abjured Islam.

The subject has only been made more obscure by the works of Abu'l Fazl and Mulla Badauni. The English translations of their works have further confounded the confusion by wrongly translating the ambiguous and cryptic sentences written by Abu'l Fazl and Badauni, and by often adding incorrect notes.

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[1] *History of Muslim Civilization in India and Pakistan*, pp. 255-56.

[2] *The Indian Muslims*, p. 264.

[3] M.L. Roychoudhury, *The Din Ilahi* (Calcutta, 1941), p. 281; Shri Ram Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* (2nd ed., Bombay, 1962) pp. 48-49; R.P. Tripathi, *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* (3rd edition, Allahabad, 1963,), pp. 280-291; Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (2nd edition, Allahabad, 1963,), pp. 136, 165, 182, 189, 214, 247.

[4] *The Commentary*, p. 197; Monserrate was surprised to find that "in spite of his [Akbar's] very heterodox attitude towards the religion of Muhammad, and in spite also of the fact that Musalman regard such an attitude as an unforgivable offence," Zelaldinus had not been assassinated.

[5] E. Rehatsek, *The Emperor Akbar's Repudiation of Islam and Profession of His own Religion called the Tovhhyd Elahy Akbar Shahy* (Bombay, 1866).

[6] Blochmann translates extracts from Badauni as an appendix to Abu'l Fazl's *A'in i Rah-Numuni*. In order to complete his picture of Akbar's religious views (pp. 176-223), he concludes, "Akbar, in all probability, continued worshipping the sun, and retained all other peculiarities of his monotheistic Parsi-Hinduism, dying as he had lived . . . With Akbar's death, the Divine Faith died out. Akbar, solely relying on his influence and example, had established no priesthood, and had appointed no proper person for propagating his faith." (Blochmann, pp. 221-22)

The letters and reports of the Jesuit Fathers of three missions which visited Akbar's court could have been of great value as an independent source, but unfortunately they are suspect. Most of the Jesuits knew, no Persian, and were only too ready to accept gossip and rumours as true; they sought an explanation for their failure to convert Akbar to Christianity by alleging an obstinate refusal to accept the truth. They were impressed with the interest Akbar took in Christianity, and in the respect he showed them and their teachings, but the Emperor's failure to have himself baptised shocked them. They were appalled by his inquisitive spirit and respect for the beliefs of other religions. Even Father Jerome Xavier, who came with the third mission to Akbar's court in 1594 and who was still there when the Emperor died in 1605, was at a loss to know what to report, "And yet one does not know for certain what law he follows; for though he is certainly not a Mahometan, as his actions show plainly enough; and though he seems to incline more to the superstitions of the Pagans, Gentiles being more welcome at his court than Mahometans, he cannot be called an ethnique, for he adores and recognises the true God, the maker of heaven and earth, and yet at the same time, he worship the sun."[1] He adds that, "he [Akbar] aims at making a new religion, of which he himself is to be head; and it is said that he already has numerous followers; but that these are for the most part flatterers, or people who have been bribed by money. It is more or less certain that he has a strong desire to be looked upon, and esteemed as a God, or same great Prophet; and he would have people believe that he performs miracles, healing the sick with the water with which he washes his feet."[2]

Although Father Xavier speaks with great uncertainty about Akbar's personal beliefs and the nature of the new religion which he was trying to establish, a later scholar, Father Daniel Bartoli, whose writings were based on the writings of Monserrate, Peruschi, and other Jesuit Fathers, has gone to the extent of giving a fantastic account of a general council for the promulgation of Akbar's official religion. According to him Akbar convened this after his return from Kabul in the beginning of 1582, and invited "all the masters of learning and the military commandants of the cities round about; excluding only Father Ridolfo, whom it was vain to expect to be other than hostile to his sacrilegious purpose—a fact of which more than enough proof had been given already."[1] Bartoli concludes his account with the remark that "The business being thus closed, the King sent one of the shaikhs, a most distinguished old man, to proclaim in all quarters, that in a short time the [religious] law to be professed throughout the Mogul empire would be sent from the Court; and that they should make themselves ready to take it for the best, and accept it with reverence, whatever it might be."

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[1] C.H. Payne (translator), *Akbar and the Jesuits* (London, 1926), p. 97.
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 67-68.

Vincent A. Smith, who attaches great credibility to the above account, identifies the old man referred to as Shaikh Abu'l Fazl's father, Shaikh Mubarak.[2] According to him, this council was identical with one described by Badauni in his account of 990/1582. Badauni writes:

> "As he held a council for inventing a religion, Raja Bhagwan Das said, 'Well, I accept that both Hindus and Muslims are bad, but only tell us what other people there are, and what opinion they hold so that we may follow them.' His Majesty was somewhat convinced and ceased to urge him. But the alteration of the laws of our glorious Faith was undertaken and continued. And the innovation (*ihdas*) of *bid'at* is the chronogram of the event."[3]

The only point in common between the above two accounts is that both were said to have been convened by Akbar with the specific purpose of inventing a new religion. Bartoli speaks of a decision arrived at by the Emperor, while Badauni implies that the meeting ended in fiasco.

Smith thinks the *A'in Iradat Gvzinan* (Rules for the disciples), translated by Blochmann as "Ordinances of the Divine Faith,"[4] to be the original canon of the Divine Faith and considers all the new political and social regulations issued by Akbar from time to time as laws of the Divine Faith. Like Badauni, he writes:

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[1] *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 211.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 212, fu. 1.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 313; Lowe, II, p. 323.

[4] Blochmann, p. 175.

> "It is impossible to mention all the silly regulations that were issued, and the exact chronological order of the issues has not been recorded fully."[1]

Professor M.L. Roychoudhry relies upon the *Dabistan i-Mazahib's* description of the ten rules; Peter Hardy, who endorses the view that the Divine Faith (Din Ilahi) was enunciated in 1582, considers these same ten rules to be its basis. Unfortunately both scholars depend upon Shea and Troyer's translation of the *Dabistan* as follows:

> "The Divine Faith was Sufi in conception, with ceremonial expressions borrowed from Zoroastrianism. It was strictly monotheistic and incorporated Shi'ite ideas of the role of *mujtahid* or interpreter of the faith. In brief, it appears to owe more to Islam than to Hinduism. Unfortunately the beliefs and practices of the Divine Faith are nowhere comprehensively stated. They have to be pieced together from Abu'l Fazl's *Institutes of Akbar* (*A'in i-Akbari*); Badauni's *Selected Histories* (*Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh*) and Muhsin i-Fani's *School of Religions* (*Dabistan i- Mazahib*).[2]

Hardy then goes on to give two extracts from the *Dabistan* and one from the *Muntakhabu't-Tawarikh* to complete the picture.[3] 'Aziz Ahmad ends his analysis of Akbar's Divine Faith by noting its "surprising indifference to Hinduism." He considers it to be the very antithesis of Kabir Panth and such other movements and suggests that "it was imperial and aristocratic, whereas the other movements were popular and demotic."[4]

In order to unravel the tangled skein of views on the subject, it will be re-examined under the following heads:

1. Akbar's religious beliefs and the forms of worship he practised;

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[1] *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 220.

[2] Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Sources of Indian Tradition* (New York, 1958), p. 443.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 443-44.

[4] *Studies in Islamic Culture*, p. 178.

2. Examination of the term Din Ilahi;
3. *Ikhlas i-Chahargana* (Four Degrees of Devotion).
4. *Muridi* (Discipleship).
5. Ten Virtues of the Din Ilahi.

1. *Akbar's Religious Beliefs and the Forms of Worship he Practised.*

The crystallisation of Akbar's religious beliefs and thinking was a long drawn-out process and not the reward of painstaking study and research as in the case of Abu'l Fazl. The religious and intellectual conflicts of his age had taught Akbar to map out his own way, and his political ambitions held him firmly in his new path. According to Abu'l Fazl Akbar observed at the end of an 'Ibadat Khana debate held in 1578 that:

> "Most persons, from intimacy with those who adorn their externals, but are inwardly bad, think that it can be obtained by outward semblance, and following the letter of Muhammadanism without internal conviction. Hence by fear and force we compelled many believers in the Brahman (i. e. Hindu) religion to adopt the faith of our ancestors. Now that the light of truth has taken possession of our soul; it has become clear that in this distressful place of contradictions (the world), where dimness of comprehension, and conceit, are heaped up, layer upon layer, not a single step can be taken without the torch of proof, and that that creed is profitable which is adopted with the approval of wisdom. To repeat the creed, to remove a piece of skin [i.e. to become circumcised] and to place the top of one's bones on the ground [the head in *sijdah* i.e. adoration] from dread of the *Sultan*, is not seeking after God."[1]

Lastly, Abu'l Fazl records Akbar's sense of shame about his past actions:

> "We blame ourselves for what we did in accordance with old rules and before the truth about faith had its rays on our heart."[2]

This is reiterated in the *A'in i-Akbari*, which records the following:

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 255; Bev, III, p. 369.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 255; *Ibid*, pp, 369-70.

> "Formerly I forcibly converted (people) to my religion; and deemed it Islam (Musalmani). As I grew in knowledge, I was overwhelmed with shame. Not being a Muslim myself, I felt it improper to force others to become such. What constancy is to be expected from men converted by compulsion?"[1]

'Aziz Ahmad interprets this as meaning that :

> "For him [Akbar] true Islam meant tolerance and understanding and an extension of the human rights and privileges reserved in earlier Indo-Muslim political philosophy for Muslims alone, to all non-Muslims, including the rights of conversion and reconversion, promulgation of laws of marriage and laws against abduction, freedom of worship and construction of the houses of worship."[2]

'Aziz Ahmad is right as far as his interpretation of Akbar's understanding of Islam is concerned, but Abu'l Fazl's comments show that Akbar thought dogmatism, religious persecution and want of reason and understanding in dealing with one's own religion and with that of others as inimical to the true religious and spiritual life. Only a constant battle with one's presumptuous soul, and rigorous self-examination to make anger and lust submissive to reason can lead the inquirer along the right path. A number of Akbar's saying indicate that no one should violate the dictates of reason and everyone should seek to "burnish" it. He says, "Commending obedience to the dictates of reason and reproving the slavish following (*taqlid*) of others need the art of no arguments. If imitations (*taqlid*) were commendable, the prophets would have followed their predecessors"[3]—in short, they would not have troubled to reform mankind. He regards the worshippers of customs as simpletons who take the traditions of the ancients for the dictates of reason, and gather for themselves eternal perdition.

However, under the influence of the *ishraqi* thinkers Akbar had come to believe that discursive reasoning was not always a sure guide in spiritual matters, and that intellectual intuition and inner illumination cannot be obtained without formal training of the mind and purification of soul.[1] To emerge from behind the "veil of error" and become a worshipper of truth depends, he says, "on coming under the influence of some personality of spiritual eminence whose inward attractions may set the heart at rest from the questions of Why and Wherefore [so that it may] become fixed and pledged in one place."[2] It was because of this conviction that Akbar never ceased his search for ascetics, recluses and spirituals proper who could help him to obtain spiritual illumination. Badauni too quotes several examples of Akbar's passionate search for spiritual guides, not forgetting to mention how often he encountered impostors.[3]

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 181; Jarrett, III, p. 429.
[2] *Studies in Islamic Culture*, p. 175.
[3] *A'in*, III, p. 179; Jarrett, III, p. 427.

He is recorded as saying:

> "Although I am the master of so vast a kingdom and all the appliances of universal sway (*jahangiri*) are at hand, yet since true greatness consists in obeying the will of God, my mind is not at ease in this diversity of sects and creeds, and my heart is oppressed by this outward pomp of circumstance with what satisfaction can I undertake the conquest of empire? How I wish for the coming of some pious man [*sahib i-dil*], who will resolve the distraction of my heart."[4]

The sufi poetry which he had started learning during childhood,[5] and the *diwans* of sufi poets which were constantly read aloud to him,[6] filled his soul with cravings for Reality and Truth.[7] However, he was convinced that God is the Cause and essence of all existence and that He manifests Himself through man.[8] Close contacts with yogis and other Hindu ascetics confirmed him in the belief that Reality is one and is like an object reflected in countless mirrors. The bond between the Creator and the creature is inexpressible. "Each person according to his own understanding gives the Supreme Being a name, but in reality to name the Unknowable is vain."[1]

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[1] Seyyed Hossein Nasr says, 'Reason, without intuition and illumination is, according to Suhrawardi, puerile and half-blind and can never reach the transcendent source of all truth and intellection; whereas intuition, without a preparation in logic and the training and development of the rational faculty, can be led astray, and furthermore cannot express itself succinctly and methodically."*Science and Civilization in Islam*, (Cambridge, 1968), p. 329.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 241; Bev, III, p. 345.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 286; Lowe, p. 294.

[4] *Ain*, III, p. 183; Jarrett, p. 433.

[5] *Supra*. p. 66-67.

[6] Blochmann, p. 110.

[7] *A'in*, III, p. 183; Jarrett, III, p. 433.

[8] *The Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism*, pp. 173, 208-52.

Using commonplace examples such as given in the contemporary *Nath Panthi* and *Sant* poetry, he explains the relationship between God and the human heart as follows:

> "Hindu women fetch water from their rivers, tanks or wells and many of them bear several pitchers one above the other upon their heads and converse and chat freely with their companion, walking the while over any inequalities of ground. If the heart in like manner preserves the balance of its pitchers, no harm will befall them. Why should men be inferior to these in their relations with the Almighty."[2]
>
> "The divine grace is shed upon all alike, but some from unpreparedness in due season and others from incapacity are unable to profit thereby; the handiwork of the potter evidences this truth."[3]

And again:

> "Some there are who maintain that men walk in opposition to the will of God [*riza*], and that their salvation depends on their renunciation of this evil habit; but he who is spiritually illumined knows that no one can effectively oppose His commands, and physicians provide a remedy for the sick with this in mind."[4]

With the followers of Ibn 'Arabi, Akbar believed that "to impute the existence of evil to Satan is to make him a co-partner of the Almighty,"[5] and that the legend of Satan is an old-world notion, for no one has the power to oppose the will of God. Good and evil and virtue and vice arise from the wondrous phases of God's grace, and their discordant effects result from human actions. He disputes the view of Hindu philosophers that in the garnering of good works one should have death con-

[1] *A'in*, III, p. 178; Jarrett, III, p. 424.
[2] *Ibid*, III, p. 178; *Ibid*, III, p. 424.
[3] *Ibid*, III, p. 178; *Ibid*, III, p. 425.
[4] *Ibid*, III, p. 179; *Ibid*, III, p. 426.
[5] *Ibid*, III, p. 179; *Ibid*, III, p. 426.

stantly in view and affirms that "in the pursuit of virtue, the idea of death should not be entertained, freed from hopes and fears, we should practise virtue for the sake of its own worth."[1]

Akbar's sayings reveal that he believed in prophets and considered them the elect of God. One of his observations speaks with respect of prophets, their missions and miracles. He questions the traditional belief that trials fall most heavily on the prophets, then upon the saints, and in proportionately diminishing degrees upon the virtuous; and says that it would be unjust for "one who knows both what is hidden and what is manifest" to suffer tribulation.[2] He says that no one in India claimed prophethood because pretensions to divinity had superseded prophethood.[3] He refers to Muhammad as our Prophet[4] *(paighamber i-ma)* and naively demands that since the prophets were *ummi*[5] (illiterates), believers "should therefore see that one of their sons remained illiterate."[6] As late as May 1601, in a letter which he sent to the Viceroy of Goa, Akbar referred to himself as "the great Lord of the law of Mahomet . . ."[7]

Speaking of his passion for discourses on *hikmat* (peripatetic and *ishraqi* thoughts) Akbar admits that they distract him from all else and that he must forcibly restrain himself from listening to them lest they interfere with his political duties.[8] In one of his utterances, he approvingly quotes the viewpoint of Mir Saiyid Sharif Jurjani on the saying that "the love of a cat is a part of religion."[9] He blames scholars of traditional learning for evoking religious controversies and thinks that the contradictory Quranic commentaries and conflicting statements in the *hadis* are responsible for much confusion in Islam.[1]

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[1] *Ain*, III, p. 185, Jarrett, III, 438.

[2] *Ibid*, III, p. 186; *Ibid*, p. 439.

[3] *Ibid*, III, p. 185; *Ibid*, p. 438.

[4] *Ibid*, III, p. 185; *Ibid*, p. 438.

[5] The term *ummi* as applied to Muhammad was often quoted as evidence that he could not read or write. In another context it means a deficient knowledge of the holy scripture. According to R. Paret, neither the Arabic *umma*, the Hebrew *umma* nor the Aramaic *ummetha* can be interpreted as "layman". However Muslims believe it to mean an inability to read and write.

[6] *A'in*, III, p. 182; Jarrett, III, p. 432.

[7] *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. 115.

[8] *A'in*, III, p. 183; Jarrett, III, p. 433.

[9] *Ibid*, p. 185; *Ibid*, p. 439.

It seems that his great interest in *hikmat* and in Ibn 'Arabi reduced the importance of sufis such as Mansur al-Hallaj in his eyes. He brackets Hallaj with Pharaoh and concludes that both were arrogant, and deemed contemplation of one's self (*khud-bini*) as the equivalent of contemplation of God (*Khuda-bini*).[2]

He quotes several Hindu[3] sayings but does not mention any Hindu sage by name.

Miracles do not impress Akbar, who says that supernatural manifestations attract only the common people, wise men accepting nothing without adequate proof.[4] Every creed, he says, believes in miracles; but this belief is the product of mental enthusiasm, for truth does not vary whatever the religion.[5]

Sages and ascetics of all religions Akbar held in great esteem, but he did not consider that a life of retirement and asceticism was necessarily productive of good. He emphasised that the most difficult task of all was to live in the world and refrain from evil. He remarked "Whoever seeks from me permission to retire from the world will meet with cheerful acquiescence in his desires. If he has really withdrawn his heart from the world, by which only fools are deceived, to dissuade him would be very reprehensible; but if he only affects it from ostentation, he will receive the requital thereof."[6]

Among the positive allegations made by Badauni against Akbar is that he believed in the transmigration of souls. According to Badauni, Akbar much approved of the pronouncement that, "There is no religion in which the doctrine of transmigration has not a firm hold."[7] Akbar's utterances indicate a serious uncertainty in the Emperor's mind upon the subject. The severity of llness amongst the innocent young, he says, suggests to some exent the truth of the doctrine of metempsychosis,[8] and he adds:

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 182; Jarrett, III, p. 432.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 188; *Ibid*, III, p. 444.

[3] Jarrett, III, pp. 436-38.

[4] *A'in*, III, p. 180; Jarrett, III, p. 428.

[5] *A'in*, p. 185; *Ibid*, p. 437.

[6] *Ibid*, III, p. 183; *Ibid*, p. 434.

[7] *MT*, II, pp. 256, 258; Lowe, pp. 263, 265.

[8] *A'in*, III, p. 87; Jarrett, III, p. 442.

> "What the divine books say, that great sinners in ancient times were changed into monkeys and bears, is credible."[1]

However, he argues:

> "If the idea were merely that souls were transfused into a few determinate shapes, this would be unworthy; but if the strange workings of destiny joined them the mineral, vegetable and animal life in ascending progression till they were exalted to high dignity (man), where would be the wonder?"[2]

The above view is nothing but a prose version of Maulana Jalalu'd Din Rumi's celebrated verses:

"I died as mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was a Man.
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as Man, to soar,
With angels blest; but even from angelhood,
I must pass on: all except God doth perish.[3]

Badauni accuses Akbar of restricting the killing of animals out of consideration for Hindus.[4] Abu'l Fazl ascribes Akbar's abstinence from eating meat on certain days to sufi (*sufiyana*) practice.[5] Several of Akbar's remarks confirm this. One of these, "it is not right that a man should make his stomach the grave of animals";[6] is also attributed to the Caliph 'Ali (656-61). Akbar seems to be moved mainly by his sense of pity for animals; and it is possible that Jain influence might have confirmed him in his vegetarian ideas. He wonders why it should not be lawful to eat an elephant, so that one animal might avail for many.[7] Following ancient Hindu and Buddhist practices,[8] he advocates that "butchers, fishermen and the like who have no other occupation but taking life, should have a separate quarter and their association with others should be prohibited by fine."[1] Lastly he states:

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[1] *Ai'n*, III, p. 187; Jarrett, III, p. 442.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] R.A. Nicholson, *Rumi, Poet and Mystic* (London, 1964), p. 103.
[4] *MT*, III, p. 322.
[5] *A'in*, I, p. 38; Blochmann I, p, 64.
[6] *A'in*, II, p. 187; Jarrett, III, p. 443.
[7] *A'in*, p. 189; Jarrett, p. 445.
[8] Jarrett, p. 446 note no. 17.

> "Were it not for the thought of the difficulty of sustenance, I would prohibit men from eating meat. The reason why I do not altogether abandon it myself is, that many others might willingly forego it likewise and be thus cast unto despondency."[2]

The above analysis of Akbar's religious beliefs confirms that he was sincere in the following view which he passionately advocated:

> "It is my duty to be in good understanding with all men. If they walk in the way of God's will, interference with them would be in itself reprehensible; and if otherwise, they are under the malady of ignorance and deserve my compassion."[3]

His endorsement or questioning of both Hindu and Muslim religious beliefs was not motivated by the desire to ridicule or denounce them, but to understand their spiritual value. Both orthodox Muslims and the Jesuit Fathers were shocked to find him worshipping God in accordance with the beliefs of different religions. According to Father Monserrate, when Akbar visited the Fathers of the first Jesuit mission in 1582, at which time they were educating his son, Murad, he "entered the oratory unaccompanied by any of his guards or courtiers and, having removed his turban from his head, fell upon his knees and prayed, first of all in the Christian fashion, then in his own, that is to say, after the manner of the Saracens of Persia, whose law he still outwardly observed, and lastly in the fashion of the Gentiles: 'God,' he said, as he rose from his devotions, 'ought to be adored with every kind of adoration."[4]

Although after 1579 he no longer made the pilgrimage to Ajmer, which he had hitherto regularly done, during his march to Kabul early in 1581, a white tent used to be set up within the royal enclosure where Akbar performed Islamic prayers. On his return from Kabul in August 1581 after crushing Mirza Hakim's rebellion Father Monserrate did not notice the white tent but he saw him publicly performing his prayers at 'Ali Masjid near Landi

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 189; Jarrett, III, p. 446.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 189; *Ibid*, p. 446.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 182; *Ibid*, p. 430-31.
[4] *Akbar and the Jesuits*, pp. 25-26.

Kotal.[1] According to Father Monserrate, Akbar claimed that he belonged to the sect of "Sauphii" (sufi). What appealed to him most was contemplating God and repeating His names, as he had always done.[2] The new form of worship which he openly performed was the adoration of the sun. In connection with his account of 991/1583, Badauni says:

> "He began to worship the sun four times a day: in the morning and evening, and at noon and midnight. He had also collected one thousand-and-one Hindi (Sanskrit) names for the sun, and read them daily at noon, devoutly turning towards the sun; he then used to get hold of both ears, and turning himself quickly round about, used to strike the lower ends of his ears with his fists. He also adopted several other practices of this type. He used to wear the Hindu mark on his forehead."[3]

It seems that Akbar repeated these names in the morning too. Justifying his sun worship, the Emperor observes:

> "A special grace proceeds from the sun, the exalted, in favour of kings, and for this reason they pray and consider it worship of the Almighty; but the short-sighted are thereby scandalized."[4]

He blames the orthodox for criticising him and says that "If their understanding were not at fault how could they forget the *Surah* (Chapter) beginning "By the sun."[5] Abu'l Fazl, who was the principal advocate of a deep relationship between rulers and the sun, says that "His Majesty maintains that to be friendly with light is to worship God and to perform divine praise; black-hearted ignorant men consider this forgetfulness of the Almighty, and fire-worship, but the deep-sighted know better. As the external form of worship of the elect is based upon propriety, and a people think the neglect of some sort of worship abominable, there can be nothing improper in the veneration of that exalted element which is the source of man's existence, and of the duration of his life; nor should base thoughts enter such a matter."[6]

[1] *The Commentary*, p. 155.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 173.
[3] *MT*, II, p. 322; Lowe, II, p. 332.
[3] *A'in*, III, p. 184; Jarrett, III, p. 435.
[5] Chapter 91.
[6] *A'in*, I, p. 28; Blochmann, p. 50.

He goes on to quote Shaikh Sharafu'd Din Yahya Munyari,[1] who is said to have remarked. "When the sun sets, what can a man do but depend upon a lamp?" Curiously enough, the saying is incorporated with Akbar's without mentioning its source, with the addition: "to light a candle is to commemorate the rising of the Sun."[2]

To Abu'l Fazl, Akbar's sun-worship was designed only to satisfy the externalists who regarded some form of formal worship as indispensable for a religious life, but to Akbar himself it was a way of exhibiting gratitude to the sun, which he believed to regulate his affairs as a ruler. It seems also that his intimate friend, Bir Bal, had convinced him that the sun was a perfect form of divine manifestation[3] (*mazhar i-tamm*). However, after 1580 Akbar attached little importance to specific forms of worship, "Amongst monarchs, divine worship is expressed by their justice and good administration: the adoration of ascetics is expressed by their mortification of body and spirit. All strife is caused by this, that men neglect the necessities of state, and occupy themselves with extraneous concerns."[4]

Like Abu'l Fazl, Akbar held an exaggerated notion of the importance and status of sovereignty. He observed:

> "The very sight of kings has been held to be a part of divine worship. They have been conventionally turned to the shadow of God, and indeed to behold them is a means of calling to mind the Creator, and suggests the protection of the Almighty."[5]

He promises that "whoever with a sincere heart and in simplicity of mind follows my institutes will profit, both spiritually and temporally, the fulfilment of his wishes."[1]

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[1] The celebrated saint of Bihar (died 1380-81).

[2] *A'in*, III, p. 187; Jarrett, III, p. 443. Compare Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi Maqtul according to whom "The soul of man is essentially composed of light, that is why man becomes joyous at the sight of the light of the sun or fire and fears darkness. All the causes of the universe return ultimately to light, all motion in the world, whether it be of the heavens or of the elements, is caused by various regent lights (*nur mudabbir*) which are ultimately nothing but illuminations of the Light of lights." (Hossein Nasr in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, I, p. 388).

[3] *MT*, II, p. 260; Lowe, II, p. 268.

[4] *A'in*, III, p. 189; Lowe III, p. 451.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 189; *Ibid*, p. 450.

These sayings glorify sovereignty and the state without any reservation. They were bound to be misinterpreted by orthodox Muslims and by all those individuals whom Akbar's measures had stripped of power and privileges. Abu'l Fazl, who had exalted Akbar to the status of the Perfect Man, considered obedience to the imperial laws to be religious duty. A close examination of various terms used by contemporary authors is essential for deciding whether the Din Ilahi and the Mughal administrative system introduced by Akbar are one and the same, or whether Akbar's religious innovations alone constitute the Din Ilahi.

2. *Examination of the term Din Ilahi*

Badauni, who speaks of a new religion invented by Akbar without defining it precisely uses four different terms in different contexts:

1. Tauhid i-Ilahi
2. Din Ilahi
3. *Ikhlas i-Chahargana* or *Maratib i-Chahargana* (Four degrees of devotion or discipleship)
4. *Muridi* (discipleship)

In his account of the year 991/1583, Badauni tells of Akbar's interest in the way of life of ascetics and sages believed to have led very long lives varying from 100 to 1,000 years. According to Badauni, Akbar was impressed by their way of life and himself became less self-indulgent with regard to food (especially meat), drink and sexual intercourse. He had his head tonsured because he believed that at death the soul of perfect being passes out by the crown (which is the tenth opening in the human body)[2] with a noise resembling thunder; a proof of felicity for the soul, and the salvation from sin of the dead body. By metempsychosis the soul would pass into the body of some mighty king. The Emperor gave his religious system the name of Tauhid i-Ilahi. He used the yogi technical term *chela* as the name of the group of his special disciples (*murids*).[3]

The system described above might shock the orthodox, but sufis who knew that there was no antagonism between Nath yogi and sufi terms, such as the followers of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi,[1] could not take exception to it. The fact that Akbar desired an exceptionally long life is corroborated by Abu'l Fazl, who planned the *Akbar Nama* on the assumption that the Emperor would live for at least 120 years. The theory of *Tauhid i-Ilahi* as described above is a curious amalgam of Rumi and Gorakhnath and could not serve as the framework for any durable religious system.

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 184; Jarrett, III, p. 435.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 325.

[3] *MT*, II, pp. 325-26; Lowe, p. 335.

Badauni uses the term Din Ilahi in connection with a declaration which Mirza Jani Beg of Thatta is said to have signed. It is described in connection with the events of 990/1582. But as Mirza Jani Beg only appeared at Akbar's court[2] in 1001/1593, the event must have occurred, if at all about the same year. Badauni says:

> "Ten or twelve years later, things had come to such a pass that abandoned wretches, such as Mirza Jani Beg, governor of Thatta, and other apostates, wrote their confession to the following effect—I, so and so, son of so and so, do voluntarily, and with sincere predilection and inclination, liberate and dissociate myself from the traditional and imitative (*taqlidi*) Islam which I have seen my fathers practice and heard them speak about, and join the Din Ilahi of Akbar Shah accepting the four degrees of devotion, which are the sacrifice of property, life, honour and religion.'[3]

Blochmann translates the first part of the declaration as follows:

> "I, such a one, son of such a one, have willingly and cheerfully renounced and rejected the Islam in all its phases, whether low or high, as I have witnessed it in my ancestors. . ."[4]

Lowe translates it:

> "I who am so and so, son of so and so, do voluntarily, and with sincere predilection and inclination utterly and entirely renounce and repudiate the religion of Islam, which I have seen and heard of my fathers. . . ."[5]

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[1] *Alakh Bani*, pp. 47-48.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 633; Bev, III, p. 971.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 304.

[4] Blochmann, p. 203.

[5] Lowe, p. 314.

This declaration does not refer to "the rejection of Islam in all its phases" as Blochmann interprets it, nor to the renunciation and repudiation of Islam as Lowe translates it, but it specifically mentions *ibra* and *tabarra*[1] (liberation and disassociation) from *majazi* and *taqlidi* Islam (traditional and imitative Islam). It seems that after the signing of the *mahzar* Akbar started urging his orthodox nobles to renounce *taqlid*. Badauni says that he tried to persuade Qutbu'd Din Muhammad Khan,[2] Shahbaz Khan and the like to renounce *taqlid* but they refused. Qutbu'd Din Muhammad Khan objected that all the rulers of the countries to the west of India, such as the Sultan of Turkey[3] held the same religion whether it was *taqlidi* or not. If they heard of all this, he asked, what would they say? Reference to Turkey made Akbar lose his temper but there is no denying the fact that after 1580, Islam in Akbar's court came to be divided into two; the *taqlidi* by the orthodox, and the *ijtihadi* or *tahqiqi* (based on truth or reasoning) followed by the unorthodox. Abu'l Fazl and a section of the new elite belonged to the latter group.

Badauni mentions the *Ikhlas Chahargana* in at least four other places in his history of Akbar, showing that they were the basic pillars of Akbar's new faith or, in other words, Akbar's heretical innovation. He defines them at the end of his account of 988/ February 1581 as follows:

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[1] The Shi'i use the word in the sense of their dissociation with the first three Caliphs, and all the enemies of ʻAli. In India some of them insist upon its recitation publicly and loudly in the form, "curses (*la'nat*) on so and so" ujaddid and his sons in their letters also use this word in a similar derogatory sense against Hindus, Shi'is and other innovators in orthodox Sunnism.

[2] Qutbu'd Din Khan (the youngest brother of Shamsu'd Din Atga Khan) who found a *jagir* in the Punjab is known to have constructed several mosques in Lahore. In the pursuance of Akbar's scheme for dispersing the Atgas (Atga Khail) in different parts of India, Qutbu'd Din was given a *jagir* in Malwa. Although an efficient and loyal general, he was unable to crush the revolt of Muzaffar the rebel governor of Gujarat to whom he surrendered, to be put to death by the faithless Muzaffer in November 1584. His *mansab* was 5,000 and Akbar had further honoured him by appointing him the guardian of Prince Salim in August 1579. For the conversation referred to above see, *MT*, II, p. 274; Lowe, p. 282.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 274; Lowe, p. 282. Akbar is said to have asked Qutbu'd Din Muhammad, if he was exhibiting such opposition in order to please the far-off khwandkar-Rum (Sultan of Turkey), so that when he went to Turkey he might find a place of distinction for himself. If so, he could go there (immediately).

> "During this time the four degrees of devotion to His Majesty were defined. They consisted in readiness to sacrifice to the Emperor property, life, honour and religion. Whoever had sacrificed these things possessed the four degrees; and whoever had sacrificed one of these four possessed one degree. All the courtiers now put down their names as faithful disciples of the Court."[1]

Badauni contradicts this, however, in his account of 1004/-1595, which makes it apparent that even by that time not all the courtiers were *murids*, and Sadr i-Jahan had not even undergone initiation. He says:

> "During this month, Sadr i-Jahan, the *mufti* of the Imperial Dominions, who had reached the mark of a *mansab* of One Thousand, joined the circle of discipleship, as also his two foolish sons; and having taken the *shast*[2] of discipleship, he went into the snare like a fish, and so got his *mansab* of One Thousand. He asked His Majesty what he was to do with his beard and received the answer that it should remain. On the same day Mulla Taqi of Shustar joined, who looks upon himself as the most learned of the learned, and is just now engaged in rendering the *Shah Nama* into prose in accordance with the Emperor's orders. Whenever the word 'Sun' occurs he uses such phrases as *jallat 'azamatuhu* and *'azz shanuhu*. Amongst others who joined was a Shaikhzada, one Gosala the fool (*kham*) of Banaras (but what good can be expected from a *zadah!*),[3] Mulla Shah Muhammad of Shahabad, and Sufi Ahmad, the musician of Masnad i-Sa'd of Delhi, who claimed to be the progeny of his holiness Ghaus us-Saqlain."[4] They all accepted the four degrees of devotion and received *mansabs* from 100 to 500.

Blochmann presents the following list of the members of the Divine Faith:

1. Abu'l Fazl.
2. Faizi, his brother, Akbar's court poet.

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 291; Lowe, p. 299.

[2] "Glory be to His majesty" and "splendour"; phrases used for God.

[3] A word expressive of contempt such as *haramzadah* (bastard).

[4] Shaikh 'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani (1077/78-1166) the founder of the Qadiri order; *MT*, II, p. 404; Lowe, p. 418.

3. Shaikh Mubarak, of Nagaur, their father.
4. Ja'far Beg Asaf Khan, of Qazwin, an historian and poet.
5. Qasim i-Kahi, a poet.
6. 'Abdu's Samad, Akbar's court-painter; also a poet.
7. A'zam Khan Koka, after his return from Mecca.
8. Mulla Shah Muhammad of Shahabad, a historian.
9. Sufi Ahmad.

10-12. Sadr i-Jahan, and his two sons.

13. Mir Sharif of "Amul, Akbar's apostle for Bengal."
14. Sultan Khwaja, a *sadr*.
15. Mirza Jani Beg.
16. Taqi of Shustar.
17. Shaikhzada Gosala of Banaras.
18. Bir Bal.[1]

Modern scholars consider the above to be a complete list of the members of the Din Ilahi, although Badauni in this account does not mention Din Ilahi as such. Both Blochmann and Lowe translate *ba halqai-iradat dar amda* as "joined the Divine Faith."[2] thereby showing that *iradat* and Divine Faith are identical. In other places, too, Blochmann translates *iradat* (discipleship) or *silsila i-iradat* (Chain of discipleship) as the Divine Faith.[3] If any credence is given to the above list, it would mean that by 1595 there were not more than eleven members of the Din Ilahi, reducing it to a religion with a most miserable following and not worth considering seriously.

3. *Ikhlas i-Chahargana and Muridi*

Although Badauni does not categorically state that the *ikhlas i-chahargana* and Akbar's new faith are one and the same, his account of the discipleship, *ikhlas i-chahargana*, and allegations about the apostasy of Akbar and his counsellors show that in his opinion they are the same. In order to examine the situation more thoroughly, it is essential to analyse the statements of Abu'l Fazl, who took a real pride in the *ikhlas i-chahargana* and invoked God to bestow upon him the grace these four degrees of loyalty offer.'[1] In all his writings he urges the high dignitaries of the government to be ready to sacrifice their lives, property: honour and religion in the furtherance of the interests of their imperial master. Thus, he says in the *A'in i-Akbari*, the *Wakil* or Prime Minister should have obtained the four degrees of devotion (*ikhlas i-chahargana*).[2] Commenting upon Maham Anaga's recommendation that Bahadur Khan, the brother of 'Ali Quli Khan, should be appointed Wakil in place of Bairam Khan (which Akbar accepted) he observes:

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[1] Blochmann, pp. 218-19.

[2] Lowe, p. 418; Blochmann, p. 218.

[3] *A'in*, p. 110; Blochmann, p. 218.

> "Though professionally wise and experienced men who did not get to the bottom of the affair said much about this, and in appearance they were in the right, for perfect capacity, complete experience, great integrity, ample understanding and extreme diligence are required for this great post; and in addition to these qualities there is need of complete independence, so that the holder put aside his own loss or gain and engage with all his strength in furthering his master's work. Should the putting to death of his own father be required for his benefactor's service he should not recede but exert himself to bring it about! And together with all this, which constitutes a great gift, he should be at peace with all men."[3]

Akbar seems to have been deeply influenced by the loyalty of his Rajput supporters and believed that they were endowed with all four degrees of devotion. He argued that nobody in the world could conceive possessing anything beyond property, life, honour and religion, and the readiness to sacrifice these was invariably found among his Rajput officers. The highest ideal of self-sacrifice, he thought, was held by the Hindu women who burnt themselves along with their husband's corpses.[4] Although he tried to stop forced *sati*, he expected his officers to have no regard for their own life, property, honour, and religion in the performance of their duties. Raja Man Singh's reply to Akbar on the subject of discipleship, as recorded by Badauni, makes the significance of the four degrees of devotion clearer. In December 1587 when Man Singh was appointed governor of Bihar, Akbar summoned him and the Khan i-Khanan to a private audience. During the conversation which ensued, says Badauni, Akbar introduced the subject of discipleship and proceeded to test Man Singh. The Raja answered bluntly:

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[1] *Munajat*, p. 4.

[2] *Ain*, p. 4; Blochmann, p. 5. In his note he writes "Akbar said that perfect devotedness consisted in the readiness of sacrificing four things—*jan* (life), *mal* (property), *din* (religion), *namus* (personal honour). Those who looked upon Akbar as a guide in spiritual matters (*pir*)—an honour which Akbar much coveted promised to show this devotedness, and then belonged to the *din i-ilahi*, or the Divine Faith, the articles of which Akbar had laid down, as may be seen below."

[3] *AN*, II, p. 100; Bev, II, p. 150.

[4] *AN*, III, p. 256; Bev, III, p. 371.

> "If discipleship means willingness to sacrifice one's life, I have already carried my life in my hand: what need is there of further proof? If, however, the term has another meaning and refers to faith, I certainly am a Hindu. If you order me to do so, I will become a Muslim, but I know not of the existence of any other path (religion) than these two. At this point the matter stopped and the Emperor did not question him any further."[1]

In fact Man Singh's loyalty was above suspicion, but since his *jagir* had been transferred from the Punjab to Bihar, Akbar seems to have thought it necessary to test his reaction, Man Singh's reply indicates that in the minds of the people the discipleship was thought to have some religious significance, but that Akbar did not think so, but demanded the compliance of four degrees of devotion on the part of high dignitaries for political purposes. Smith interprets Man Singh's reply as a protest against the Din Ilahi, and adds: "that anecdote shows that even four or five years after the promulgation of the new religion so-called a good deal of uncertainty as to its meaning still existed."[2]

In a letter to the Khan i-A'zam, Mirza 'Aziz Koka, Abu'l Fazl wrote that even to be displeased with his master ranked as *kufr* (infidelity); let alone to make complaints against him. He goes on to say that in matters of loyalty and devotion to their masters, servants should pay no heed to personal considerations.[3] In ancient literature, he adds, the *hakims* divided servants into three categories. (1) Those who work only for monetary gain, such as tailors, carpenters and masons; (2) Those who serve like sincere fri-

[1] *MT*, II, p. 364; Lowe, p. 375.
[2] *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 213.
[3] *MA*, II, p. 161.

ends and are motivated by no consideration other than friendship; and (3) Those who work under compulsion. Commenting upon the above three types of servants Abu'l Fazl considers the last to be most undesirable. He sympathises with those with mercenary reasons, but considers the servants belonging to the second category to be the ideal ones. The servants in this category do not bother about friendship or enmity in general, but are satisfied with serving their masters with single-minded devotion.[1]

The demand to be ready to sacrifice life, property, honour and religion for the furtherance of the imperial interests sounds fantastic, but Abu'l Fazl explains it mystically. Compared with the obligations of loyalty to the Emperor, he says, they are of little value. Life is only valuable to those who have no knowledge of their own nature, property is prized by those like merchants solely engrossed in adding up profit and loss. Honour is a matter of distinction for those who are not aware of true greatness and whose attention is given to earthly lust and worldly appetites. Religion is the guide only for those who blindly seek to traverse the road to truth and uprightness. Readiness to make these sacrifices willingly with open eyes is according to Abu'l Fazl, the sign of real eminence and nobility.[2]

Abu'l Fazl's idea of the four degrees of devotion or discipleship is also influenced by the sufic practice of wearing the *kulah i-chahar tarki* (the four-segmented cap of renunciation). The four folds of the cap worn by the Qadiri order of sufis, for example, signifies "the abandonment of this world, of the next, of consideration for men and, fourthly, of everything except God."[3] In the introduction to the *Akbar Nama* Abu'l Fazl refers to himself as one "upon the crown of whose heart is the quadripartite cap (*kulah i-chahar tarki*) of discipleship."[4]

Abu'l Fazl wrote to Mirza 'Aziz Koka that he strove to help those who were pure in heart and steadfast in loyalty to the Emperor attain the four degrees of devotion in accordance with their abilities.[5] His works exhibit his increasing concern about the scarcity of high officers of integrity and uprightness who could effectively handle the political and military needs of the expanding empire and keep pace with Akbar's ambitions of conquest and efficient government.[1] According to him, this need could only be met by a band of devoted followers who were prepared to give priority to the imperial interests over their own personal and religious ones. The Four Degrees of Devotion were intended to remind the imperial dignitaries, whether Rajputs or Mughals, Indian Muslims or Afghans, Turanis or Iranis, that religious prejudices and racial considerations should not be allowed to interfere with the imperial interest in any situation. In fact, the Four Degrees of Devotion provided the principal ideological force which sought to unify the new Mughal elite around the Mughal throne. These did not cease at the end of Akbar's reign, but never again was there a critic of Badauni's eminence to misrepresent them. Moreover Jahangir's intolerance[2] of religious dignitaries who involved themselves in politics crushed all opposition. The Mughal Emperor's continued to be addressed by their dignitaries and sons as *pir wa murshid* (spiritual guide and preceptor) or *pir wa murshid i-din wa dunya* (spiritual guide and preceptor of the faith and the world) or *pir wa murshid i-'alam wa 'alamiyan* (spiritual guide and preceptor of the world and its inhabitants). Princes and high dignitaries considered themselves to be *murids* (disciples) of their Emperors, claiming to have obtained guidance from the Emperor's angelic heart, a receptacle of divine inspiration, and a source of mystic illumination.[3] Such *murids* were inferior to those disciples who complied with the conditions of the Four Degrees of Devotion. Abu'l Fazl describes rules for the general disciples in the *a'in i-rahnumuni*.

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[1] *MA*, II, p. 159.
[2] *MA*, III, p. 225.
[3] Bev, I, p. 27-28 note.
[4] *AN*, I, p. 9; Bev, I, p. 27, note no. 2.
[5] *MA*, II, p. 156.

Muridi (*Discipleship*)

The tradition of Mughal emperors enlisting disciples continued down to Aurangzeb's reign. The practice owed its genesis mainly to Abu'l Fazl, whose claims that there is no real conflict between the religious and occupational interests of imperial officials, and that selfish attitudes and irrational prejudices alone make men wicked and fanatical. Only kings who are concerned with dispensing broadly-based justice and demonstrating kindness towards all living beings can instil harmony into a society containing a diversity of spiritual and worldly interests. Abu'l Fazl does not therefore find it surprising that the halo of sovereignty should impel a large number of people "to bind the noose of discipleship round the neck of their souls and to become one of the number of his devoted followers," however dissimilar the reasons different people have for acknowledging Akbar's eminence. For some are influenced by Akbar's wisdom, kindness, and great heartedness; others by his grandeur and conquests, others still by his spiritual eminence. On the whole, Abu'l Fazl repeatedly suggests, the loyal servants of the Court regard the furtherance of the imperial policies as the highest form of divine worship. In his account of Mirza 'Aziz Koka's Gujarat conquests of 1573, he introduces the topic with the remark:

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 404; Bev, III, p. 598.

[2] Jahangir imprisoned Saiyid Ahmad Afghan and banished Shaikh Nizam Thaneswari to Mecca. Qazi Nuru'llah Shustari was scouraged to death, and Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi (Mujaddid) was imprisoned in Gwaliar. Shaikh Nuru'l Haq, son of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi, was exiled to Kabul. A similar fate awaited Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq, but he was saved by the Emperor's death.

[3] Introductory remarks in Aurangzeb's letter in the *Adab i-'Alamgiri* and *Faiyazu'l Qawanin*.

> "The sage and acute-minded man knows that wherever the lord of the earth forms a right design, and undertakes to extend the tranquillity of mankind, the servants of the threshold of fortune become loyal under his auspicious guidance, and with one heart and endeavour recognise the work of their king, their teacher and benefactor, as the Divine command, and devote themselves to his service. The world's work is adorned, and glorious actions are revealed. At once does the sovereign of the world become successful, spiritually and materially, and the loyal, ignoring their own loss and gain, recognise the service of the sultanate to be the highest form of Divine worship. Thus they perform services such as seldom appeared in the times of former rulers."[1]

Thousands of loyal officials seem to have considered "the chain of discipleship" as the "noose of every felicity." They vied with one another in becoming disciples, although Akbar himself often asked why he should claim to guide men before he himself was guided.[2] He declared that spiritual guidance did not amount to wearing beards, putting on a patched robe and holding formal discourses in front of an audience, but was mainly concerned with diagnosing the state of the soul and setting about its reform.[1] Again, guidance to him meant only an indication of the road and instruction in the service of God; it was not an institution for gathering together disciples. The number of disciple was however very large, and constantly being increased by new recruits, twelve at a time.[2]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 23; Bev, III, p. 32.

[2] *A'in*, I, p. 110; Blochmann, p. 174.

The initiation procedure for disciples of this category is described by several authorities. Before describing Abu'l Fazl's detailed account we give below an account of the initiation of disciples in the first year of Jahangir's reign (1605-06), as described by the Emperor himself, to show the form in which the institution survived after Akbar's death. Jahangir says:

> "I promoted Shaikh Ahmad Lahauri, who from my princehood had filled the relationship of service and discipleship (*muridi*) and the position of a house-born one (*khanazad*) to the office Mir 'Adl. Disciples and sincere followers (*arbab i-ikhlas*) are[3] presented to me on his introduction. He recommeds who is worthy of receiving *shast wa shabah*[4] and it is accordingly given. At the time of initiation some words of advice are given to a disciple. He must not confuse or darken his time with sectarian quarrels, but must follow the rule of "universal concord" (*sulh-kul*) in his relations with men of different faiths; he must not kill any living creature with his own hand, and must not flay anything. The only exceptions are in battle and the chase. [Further, he is told] honour the luminaries (the Sun, Moon etc.) which are the manifestations of God's light, according to the degree of each, and recognise Allah the Most High as the true Creator and Omnipresent at all times and in all circumstances. Be careful indeed that whether in private or in public you never for a moment forget Him. . ."[5]

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 181; Jarrett, III, p. 429.

[2] Badauni, II, p. 338; Lowe, p. 350.

[3] Rogers and Beveridge's translation indicates that this event relates to Akbar. The sentence is translated "Disciples and sincere followers were presented on his introduction" (*R & B*, p. 60).

[4] Literally it means "a girdle worn by the fire-worshippers and Hindus," a hair-ring, or it may mean anything round. *Shist* means "aim." Here a ring seems to be meant, *Shabah* means likeness.

[5] *Tuzuk*, p. 28; *R & B*, pp. 60-61.

Abu'l Fazl gives the following description of the initiation of disciples:

> "When a novice bears on his forehead the sign of earnestness of purpose, and he is increasingly enquiring, His Majesty accepts him, and admits him on a Sunday, when the world-illuminating sun is in its highest splendour. . . At the above-mentioned time of everlasting auspiciousness, the novice, with his turban in his hands, puts his head on the feet of His Majesty. This is symbolical, and expresses that the novice, guided by good fortune and the assistance of his good star, has cast aside conceit and selfishness, the root of so many evils, [that he] offers his heart in worship, and now comes to inquire as to the means of obtaining everlasting life. His Majesty, the chosen one of God, then stretches out the hand of favour, raises up the suppliant, and replaces the turban on his head, meaning by these symbolical actions that he has raised up a man of pure intentions, who from seeming existence has now entered into real life. His Majesty then gives the novice the *shast*, upon which is engraved Allah u-Akbar (God is Great) which is *Ism i-A'zam* and His Majesty's symbolical motto. This teaches the novice the truth that—The pure *shast* and pure sight never err."[1]

Abu'l Fazl then goes on to give the following rules for the disciples. On seeing each other, one says "Allah u-Akbar," and the other responds "*Jall a-Jalaluh*" (Exalted be His glory).[2] This rule is intended to remind men to think of the origin of their existence, and to keep the Deity in fresh, lively, and grateful remembrance. Each disciple should prepare a dinner during his lifetime instead of what others would have had to arrange on his behalf after his death. This was regarded as a means of gathering provisions for his last journey. Each member is to give a party on the anniversary of his birthday, and bestow alms in order to prepare provisions for the long journey. The disciples should endeavour to abstain from eating meat. They may allow others to eat it without touching it themselves, but during the month of their birth they are not even to go near meat.[1] Nor shall they go near anything that they themselves have slain; nor eat of it. Neither shall they make use of the same vessels used by butchers, fishermen and bird-catchers.

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[1] *A'in*, I, p. 110; Blochmann, p. 174.

[2] Badauni describes the rules in connection with his account of 995H/1586; *MT*, II, p. 356.

Disciples should not cohabit with pregnant, old, and barren women; nor with girls under the age of puberty.[2]

Both the above accounts indicate that disciples were not initiated indiscriminately, and that there was strict screening before acceptance. Abu'l Fazl regarded discipleship to be a test of men, which brought out their internal qualities. He quotes the example of one Fath Dust, the son of 'Ali Dust Barbegi, as a case in point. Fath Dust, used to press Abu'l Fazl to have him initiated as a disciple, but as the latter did not consider him sincere he used to put him off. In July 1581, when Akbar was returning from Kabul to the Punjab, and reached the banks of the Indus, Abu'l Fazl presented the case of Fath Dust to the Emperor. Although Akbar also knew that he was not sincere in his request, nevertheless he initiated him as a disciple. Fath Dust died two days later, thus providing Abu'l Fazl with an opportunity to moralize:

> "As he was not pure of soul, and his heart did not accord with his tongue, in the course of two days he ceased to exist."[3]

Badauni is not entirely wrong in pointing out that hope and fear served as incentives for becoming disciples, and there would have been quite a lot of people like Fath Dust. There was also no dearth of people urging the Emperor to make wild religious and temporal claims. Badauni says that there were shameless and miserable wretches who tried to persuade Akbar to produce some decisive *burhan*[4] and to assume prophethood in some such manner as Shah Isma'il Safavi I (1501-24) had done. This would be a fitting response to the new millenium of the *hijrah* era. Akbar was, however, convinced that confidence in him as a leader was a matter of time and good counsel, and did not require the help of the sword. Badauni adds "indeed, if His Majesty, in setting up his claims and making his innovations, had spent a little money, he would easily have got most of his courtiers, and even more of the common people into his devilish net."[1]

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[1] *A'in,* I, p. 110; Blochmann, p. 175.

[2] *Ibid,* I, p. 110; *Ibid,* pp. 175-76.

[3] *AN,* III, p. 354; Bev, III, pp. 519-20.

[4] *Burhan* means demonstration or proof, the word has a spiritual significance in many sects.

Both Jahangir and Abu'l Fazl observe that the disciples were urged to follow the rules of "universal concord." It was not essential to conform to the beliefs about the sun held by the Emperor himself, although some poets wrote verses praising the Sun, and Mulla Sheri, wrote a long poem entitled *Hazar Shu'a'* (The Thousand Rays).[2]

According to Abu'l Fazl, the initiation ceremonies were symbolical, but even then the novices were not required to perform *sijdah*[3] (prostration) in public, although the disciples did perform it in private assemblies. Abu'l Fazl mentions this fact when discussing the regulations regarding *kornish* and *taslim* (mode of salutation). He says that the disciples "look upon a prostration before His Majesty as a prostration performed before God; for royalty is an emblem of the power of God, and a light-shedding ray from this sun of the Absolute . . . But as some perverse and dark-minded men look upon prostration as blasphemous man-worship, His Majesty, from his practical wisdom, has ordered it to be discontinued by forbidding even his private attendants from using it in the *Darbar i-'Amm* (general court-days). However, in private assembly, when "any of those are in waiting, upon whom the star of good fortune shines, and they receive an order to seat themselves," they certainly perform the prostration of gratitude (*sijdah i-sipas-guzari*) by bowing down their foreheads to the earth, and thus participate in the halo of good fortune.[4]

According to Badauni, a *shabha* or *shabih* (likeness or portrait) of the Emperor was given to a disciple who, considering it "a token of sincerity, and preamble of rectitude and felicity" placed it in a jewelled case and put it on top of his turban.[1] Abu'l Fazl says nothing about this, but it seems correct, for Jahangir even gave his likeness to foreigners. Austin of Bordeaux, who received one in 1620, says that "He (Jahangir) has given me two elephants and two horses, . . . and his likeness in gold to put on my hat, which is a mark of honour corresponding to the order of the Holy Spirit in France."[2] On 17 August, 1616, Jahangir was visited by Sir Thomas Roe, and "reached out a picture of him selfe sett in gould hanging at a wire gould chaine, with one pendant foule pearle . . . This guift was not woorth in all 30 *li;* yet it was five times as good as any he gives in that kynd, and held for an especiall favour, for that all the great men that weare the Kings image (which none may doe but to whom it is given) receive no other than a meddall of gould as bigg as six pence, with a little chayne of four inches to fasten it on their heads; which at their owne chardg some sett with stones or garnishe with pendant pearles."[3] It might be remarked that the Mughal art of portraiture, which did not develop until late in Akbar's reign, flowered dramatically under Jahangir. Portrait coins of Jahangir are well known, and the "meddall" given to Roe was probably one of them; but we know of no portrait coin of Akbar. Abu'l Fazl probably considered the occasional award of a *shabha* irrelevant; but Badauni would have thought it remarkable, if only as a divergence from Islamic taboos about painting of human figures.

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 312-13; Lowe, p. 323.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 336; Lowe, p. 341.

[3] According to Badauni, Qazi Nizam or Ghazi Khan Badakhshi (d. 1584) was the first person to suggest the performance of *sijdah* (prostration) before the Emperor. Mulla 'Alim of Kabul used to regret he had not invented it (*MT*, III, p. 153; Haig, pp. 214-15). *Sijdah* is a very old court etiquette, and Badauni's anecdote is intended to malign Akbar's favourites.

[4] *A'in*, I, p. 107; Blochmann, pp. 167-68.

Akbar, who earnestly wished for the appearance of some pious man (*sahib i-dil*) who could resolve the distraction in his heart,[4] is known to have never objected to his disciples seeking guidance elsewhere or becoming disciples of some other saint; but Jahangir seems to have made the system very rigid. At the end of Akbar's reign, Mirza 'Aziz Koka and some distinguished ladies of the harem became disciples of the orthodox Naqshbandi saint, Khwaja Khawand Mahmud, who had lately arrived at the court.

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[1] *MT*, III, p. 338; Lowe, p. 349. According to Badauni, it was given in place of the *Shajrah* (geneological tree) of discipleship.

[2] Four Letters of Austin of Bordeaux in the *Journal of the Punjab Historical Society*, IV, p. 47.

[3] William Foster, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India* (Oxford, 1926), pp. 214-15.

[4] *A'in*, III, p. 183; Jarrett, III, p. 433.

Early in Jahangir's reign an important noble who was the Khwaja's enemy got him into trouble by complaining to the Emperor that the Khwaja was pressing him to become his own *murid* (disciple) although he knew that he was the Emperor's *murid.* The Emperor was highly offended and only strong representations from some eminent nobles and the following explanation from the Khwaja could satisfy him:

> "This *faqir* (my humble self) is also Your Majesty's *murid,* for there are two types of *murids*: *murid i-inabati* or *murid i-tariqati*, and *murid i-shari'i.* The former are rare these days; the latter discipleship relates to obedience to the God's command. 'Obey God and obey the Prophet and those who are in command among you.'[1] Since Your Majesty is the Emperor and in command, I am Your Majesty's *murid.*"[2]

The above explanation, read in the light of Abu'l Fazl and Badauni's account of discipleship, shows that the discipleship did not have any religious significance, and although orthodox Muslims and the enemies of Akbar and Jahangir were shocked to see loyalty to the Mughal throne gain a new dimension, they did not have any legal or technical justification for opposing it, and had no other recourse but to spread scandal.

Among Akbar's new laws, the one which Badauni found most outrageous was an interference with Muslim burial customs. If at all true, it emanated from Akbar's adoration of the sun, and was to the effect that a man should be buried with his head towards the east and his feet to the west, the rule followed by Akbar himself when going to bed. Sultan Khwaja's grave was of a peculiar new design. A grating was fixed in the grave, so that the sun's rays, which cleanse from sins, should fall on the dead man's face every morning.[3] Akbar bitterly mourned the death of Bir Bal in the expeditions against the Yusufza'is in February 1586, but is said to have comforted himself with the thought:

> "Since he [Bir Bal] was free from all bonds of mortality and was adorned with spiritual qualities, the light of the sun is

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[1] Chapter, IV, p. 59.

[2] Muhammad Mu'inu'd Din, *Mir'at i-Taiyiba* (Rampur Ms.), pp.180-85; *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India,* pp. 183-84.

[3] *MT*, II, pp. 340-41; Lowe, pp. 351-52.

sufficient purifier for him and he is in need of no purification."[1]

Badauni's earlier remarks tend to show that if Bir Bal's dead body had been found it might have been cremated. No other corpse seem to have been buried like Sultan Khwaja's body; not even Faizi's, although both Akbar and Abu'l Fazl were present at the time of Faizi's death.

Badauni also says that at one time it seemed likely that a general order was to be issued that people should pronounce publicly the formula; "There is no God but Allah and Akbar is His *khalifah*,"[2] but that for fear of public unrest its use was restricted to a few people in the harem.[3] By this; he means to say that the disciples pronounced it privately in Akbar's presence. Although the above formula does not necessarily amount to a rejection of the prophethood of Muhammad, the disciples were not obliged to utter it in any form.

Nobles of high rank used to inscribe the word *murid* (disciple) on their signets and seals, only Shahbaz Khan and some others not doing so. In the Imperial *farmans*, compiled by Jhaveri, on a *farman* granted to Vibhaeswara Dikshita on 1 December 1588, there is a round seal in the middle of the right-hand margin containing the words "Khan i-Khanan, the disciple of Akbar Shah." The seal at the head of the *farman* contains the words "Order of Khan i-Khanan, disciple."[4] In Jahangir's farmans, the seals of the nobles of I'timad'ud Daula are inscribed with the word *murid*.[5] The nobles' practice of inscribing *murid* on seals or rings or using it in signatures was only to assert their loyalty to the Emperors. As it clearly had no religious significance in the reign of Akbar's successors, it cannot be imagined, without positive evidence, that it had any in Akbar's reign.

Besides the institution of discipleship, the practice known as *jharokha-darshan*, or the Mughal Emperor's practice of showing themselves to the common people, none of whom could be admitted to the hall of public audience, was introduced to remind the people of the halo surrounding the throne. The practical importance of the institution was far-reaching; it made the Mughal throne, an object of both love and adoration. Badauni, who considered that the practice amounted to the worship of humans, (an opinion with which all the orthodox, including Aurangzeb, concurred) says:

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 35; Lowe, p. 362.
[2] The event is described just after the account of *mahzar*.
[3] *MT*, II, p. 273; Lowe, p. 281.
[4] *Imperial Farmans* (Bombay, 1928), *farman* no. 3a.
[5] *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, p. 106.

> "Another lot, (other than disciples) consisting of hypocrites and base fellows worse than the hunters of (common men) who were not admitted into the hall of public audience (*daulat khana*), stood every morning opposite to the window near which His Majesty used to pray to the sun, and declared that they had made vows not to rinse their mouth, nor to eat and drink, unless they had seen the blessed countenance of the Emperor. . . No sooner had His Majesty finished saying the thousand-and-one names of the great luminary and stepped out into the balcony, than this crowd would prostrate themselves."[1]

The practice continued in the same form in Jahangir's reign. De Laet writes, "the king looks down into this (*jharokha*) every day when the sun rises and he himself greets the sun, the nobles gather here to greet the king, and take their stand on some rising ground. . . and the common people stand in the courtyard. He is then greeted by the people with the cry of *Padshah Salamat* (Long Live the king)."[2] According to Abu'l Fazl the crowd gathering to obtain a glimpse of the Emperor included Hindu ascetics and Muslim sufis as well as worldly men such as soldiers, merchants, artisans and cultivators etc.[3]

Both Akbar and Abu'l Fazl were prepared to go to any length to arouse the love and respect of their people for the Mughal throne. Despite their acclamation of rationalism, they did not hesitate to exploit the credulity of the masses to their advantage. The Jesuit Fathers of the third mission noted that Akbar "would have people believe that he performs miracles, healing the sick with the water with which he washes his feet. Many young women pray vows to him to get their children cured, or that they may have children. And if these things come to pass they bring him offerings, as to a saint, which, though they may be of little worth, are willingly received and highly valued by him."[1] Abu'l Fazl also says that those who lived at a great distance from Court, or wished to avoid gatherings at Court, offered their vows in secret. When the Emperor went on tour or on military expedition crowds of men and women thronged the imperial camp and praised the efficacy of their vows, or told of the spiritual assistance received.[2] The *Akbar Nama* describes several miracles said to have been performed by Akbar;[3] the *A'in i-Akbari* tells how a recluse cut off his tongue to test if it could be joined together by Akbar. Next day he found that God had granted the recluse's prayer. Concluding his account of such credulity, willfully encouraged by Akbar, Abu'l Fazl observes:

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 325-26; Lowe, p. 336.

[2] De Laet, *Empire of the Great Mogol*, pp. 92-93, 97.

[3] *A'in*, I, p. 109; Blochmann, p. 173.

> "Not a day passes but people bring cups of water to him, beseeching him to breathe upon them. He who reads the letters of the divine orders in the book of fate, on seeing the tidings of hope, takes the water with his blessed hands, places it in the rays of the world-illuminating sun, and fulfils the desire of the suppliant. Many sick people with broken hopes, whose diseases the most eminent physicians have pronounced incurable, have been restored to health by this divine means."[4]

An examination of the laws and practices of the two categories of disciples in the light of such aspects as were followed in Jahangir's reign indicates that the institution of discipleship was neither intended to be raised to the status of a religion nor was it even recognised as such by those who are believed to have been its principal adherents. We have already examined the religious thinking of Abu'l Fazl, and the next chapter will show that other prominent people who are said to have joined the so-called Din Ilahi, all held independent religious opinions. On the basis of their religious views the disciples cannot even be said to have formed a fraternity. The institution of discipleship promised no heaven or release from the process of birth and rebirth to the adherents of the system; it did not even offer any worldly enticements. Akbar, who was an ardent enquirer himself, could not make any pretensions to found a religion; the rules in *a'in i-rahnumuni* are designed to show the path of peaceful co-existence with all religions and to recognise Akbar both as temporal and spiritual lord of his people—spiritual not in the sense of one who had founded a religion, but of one under whom all religions freely flourish.

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[1] *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. 268.

[2] *A'in*, I, p. 109; Blochmann, p. 173.

[3] *AN*, I, pp. 186-88.

[4] *A'in*, I, p. 109; Blochmann, p. 173.

The Emperor, who did not himself care for the traditional prejudices and dogmas of the different religions, expected the intellectuals and elite of his age to search for the truth themselves. Indeed he was convinced that "He is a man who makes Justice the guide along the path of inquiry, and takes from every sect that which is consonant with reason. Perhaps in this way and lock whose key has been lost may be opened."[1] The framework of Akbar's own faith was based on eclectic selection, and his sun worship was influenced by the *ishraqi* notion of the exalted status of the sun; but he imposed his religious ideals upon no one. However, whether the nobles and *mansabdars* obeyed the requirements of the Four Degrees of devotion or not, the institution of discipleship bequeathed a legacy of devoted loyalty to his dynasty incomparably richer than any that previous Muslim rulers in India had left for their successors. Though rebels were not uncommon even in the royal family, and there was no dearth of factions and party politics, yet loyalty to the throne remained unshakable for the next hundred years. The genesis of this devotion was not loyalty to a Muslim power but to the state, whose declared policy was *sulh-kul.* Indeed Akbar raised *sulh-kul* higher than any religious belief, but it was no religious system. The author of *Mujmal Mufassal* written in Shah Jahan's reign, categorically states however, that in 987/1579-80 Akbar adopted the religion of *sulh-kul* out of nobleness (*farakh-hausalagi*);[2] and gives it as his opinion that acceptance of this religion was one of the causes which sparked off the rebellion in Bihar and Bengal[3] in 1580-82.

The Alleged Ten Virtues of the Din Ilahi

According to M. L. Roychoudhry, the only author who set down the fundamentals of the Din Ilahi was Muhsin Fani, whose

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 256; Bev, III, p. 371.

[2] *Mujmal Mufassal* (Bodleian 101,) f. 144a.

[3] *Mujmal Mufassal*, f. 145a.

Dabistan i-Mazahib indirectly expressed "the principles of the system through the mouth of the Philosopher in the course of a dialogue."[1] He adds that "the authority of Muhsin Fani was Mirza Shah Baigh (Sies Beg) Khan who knew it directly from A'zam Khan—a member of the Din i-Ilahi."[2] Since many scholars endorse the above view, it is essential to examine in detail the relevant chapter in the *Dabistan i-Mazahib*.[3]

Entitled *Ilahiya Beliefs*, this chapter is divided into four *nazars* ('visions', here meaning sections). The heading of the first section, which comprises only eight lines of the Nawal Kishore Lucknow Persian text, is: "On the appearance of the *Khalifah* of God." It describes two incidents, the first on the testimony of the Khwaja Mas'ud the son of Khwaja Mahmud, about whom not much is known. It tells how Khwaja Mahmud had a dream in which he was informed that the lord of the faith and of the world was Akbar. The second incident was related by Mirza Shah Muhammad, entitled Ghazni Khan, and son of Shah Beg Khan who had received the title of Khan Dauran, to the author of the *Dabistan i-Mazahib* in 1053/1643-44 at Lahore.

> "I asked Nauwab 'Aziz Koka, entitled Khan i-A'zam, what comments he had to offer on the report that when His Majesty the 'Arsh 'Ashiyani (Nestling at the Foot of the Divine Throne—a name given to the Emperor Akbar posthumously) was a child he had talked to his ['Aziz Koka's] honourable mother like the] Messiah? He answered: 'What the mother said is true."[4]

Here Mirza 'Aziz Koka only endorses a report recorded by Abu'l Fazl in the *Akbar Nama*. There the author mentions that many reliable authorities had described the miracles which Akbar is said to have performed in his childhood, and that he had personally had them confirmed by Jiji Anaga, the mother of Mirza 'Aziz Koka, who had once been Akbar's wet-nurse.[5] The author of the *Dabistan* does not acknowledge Mirza 'Aziz Koka as his authority for any of the subsequent chapters, however, hence Roy Choudhury is wrong in assuming that the account given in them of the Ilahiya faith is based on information supplied by Mirza 'Aziz.[1]

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[1] *The Din-Ilahi*, p. 278.
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 278-79.
[3] *Dabistan i-Mazahib*, pp. 311-41.
[4] *Ibid*, pp. 311-12.
[5] *AN*, I, p. 187.

The second section of the *Dabistan* gives an account of religious discussions held in the presence of Akbar. There is no evidence that the discussions concerned are the 'Ibadat Khana debates, for they sound like the individual or group discussions which Akbar used to hold after 1579-80. The first account deals with the discussion between the Sunnis and Shi'is about the truth of their respective religions. They rake up age-old Sunni—Shi'i controversies, while a Jew intervenes from time to time. In the second discussion a Christian initiates a debate with Muslims who accuse the ancient Christian sages of interpolations in the Pentateuch and the Gospel, and of obliterating from them all references to Muhammad. In this discussion Hindus, Parsis and Turks (Mongols) rendered the Muslims speechless by refuting their claim that Muhammad split the moon into two.[2] They said that none of their ancient texts referred to any such incident, and the story was a myth.

In the third debate a Jew initiates the discussion and defeats a Christian. Then a *hakim* (*peripatetic* or *ishraqi*) is invited; a Hindu was already present. Then three more scholars—a Muslim, a Christian and a Jew—were summoned and took part in a discussion with the *hakim*. The *hakim* said that in as much as the message of the prophets ought to conform to reason and should not approve of killing, the prophethood of the prophets of all the religions stood in doubt for all are known to have violated the above two principles. Similarly the *hakim* refused to accept the beliefs of the Parsis and Hindus as being true and asserted that the perfect prophet and learned apostle is "the Master, the Great Namus" *Sahib i-Namus i-Akbar* i.e. reason." He found that the revealed religions as embodied in four different scriptures had lost their credibility by contradicting each other about their respective approach to the Truth and because each of them admitted that its predecessors had failed to recognise the Truth. Finally he concluded:

> "In the sequel it became evident to wise men that emancipation is to be obtained only by the knowledge of Truth, by obeying the precepts of the perfect prophet, the Master, the Great

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[1] *Dabistan*, pp. 316-17.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 321-22.

Namus, i.e. reason. Renunciation and abandonment of the world; refraining from lust and sensuality, slaughtering that which possesses life, and from appropriating the riches of other men; and abstaining from adultery, deceit, false accusation, oppression, intimidation, foolishness, and giving (to others) opprobrious titles; and (liberation from) wilful denying of reward and punishment of the other world and doubts about the Truth are all dependent upon obeying the ten virtues, namely:

1. Liberality and beneficence.
2. Loathing of evil and repulsion of anger by calmness.
3. Overcoming worldly lusts.
4. The endeavour to obtain freedom from the bonds of worldly existence and to accumulate precious deeds for the future real and everlasting world.
5. Piety, wisdom, and devotion, with frequent meditation on the consequences of action.
6. Strength of dexterous prudence in the desire of sublime actions.
7. Addressing everyone alike with a soft voice, gentle words, and pleasing speech.
8. Good relations with brothers, giving precedence to their will over one's own.
9. A complete alienation from the material world (*khalq*), and a perfect attachment to the Supreme Being.
10. Purification of the soul by yearning after God, and so close a union with the merciful Lord that as long as the soul dwells in the body it may think itself one with Him and long to join Him, until the hour of separation from the body arrives.

The best men are those who content themselves with the least food, who sequester themselves from this perishable world, and abstain from the enjoyments of eating, dress and marriage. The vilest of people are those who think it right to be continually engaged in begetting children, in passion for wine, and in eating and drinking as if these pursuits were something divine. The rules which the perfect prophet, and great apostle, reason, ordained, are difficult to follow for the demons excite the spirit of brutish passion against them."[1]

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[1] *Dabistan*, p. 322.

After this speech follows the *hakim's* accusation against the prophets that they indulged in the pleasures of eating and drinking and ordering their followers to kill human beings. This speech makes every other participant mute, whereupon the *hakim* leaves. His Majesty Khalifatu'llah (the Khalifah of God, i.e., Akbar) thereupon advises his disciples that "it is an imperative duty to worship God, and that it is necessary to praise those who are near Him. Among mankind, no one is higher in rank than the planets, which station no man can attain. To serve none except God, the Almighty, is the wish of (any) devotee (*salik*), that is, whatever the devotee does, his object is to serve God. For instance, he takes food in order that he may be able to perform the service of God; performs services (to rulers) so that he may not be slack and deficient in his duties to God; desires a wife in order that he may give existence to a virtuous son, a worshipper of God; pays veneration to light and the stars, because they are nearer to God; and abandons himself to sleep, so that in this state his soul may ascend to the sublime world. Finally the devotee is at all times in a state of service and obedience to God; and at no time is he to be negligent in prayers (*namaz*). Moreover, he thinks himself bound to abstain from hurting living beings, and he respects all creatures of God. He does not cut grass and green trees unnecessarily, nor pollute the ground wantonly, except on a particular place, he throws neither water nor fire upon vile spots; he offers up prayers for stars."[1]

The author of the *Dabistan i-Mazahib* then adds that His Majesty the Khalifat u'l-Haq (Akbar) is called Ilahi "divine" by his followers, because in all their actions the object of their wishes is God.

A brief summary from the *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh* follows: then the section ends with an anecdote telling how in 1058/1648-49 an orthodox Hanafi, Mulla Tarsun Badakhshi by name, mysteriously broke one of his toes because he had gone to Akbar's sepulchre in Sikandra and there reviled him.[2]

The third section deals with the virtues of the stars, as approved by reason, inspiration and revelation. It refers to Akbar only once, saying that he had received divine commands to worship the stars.

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[1] *Dabistan*, pp. 328-29.
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 340-41.

The fourth section is supposed to be about the sayings of Akbar, but in fact it mainly contains the following documents from the *Mukatabat i-'Allami.*

1. Akbar's *dasturu'l 'amal* (regulations) to the officers of the imperial domain.
2. Excerpts from Akbar's letter to Shah 'Abbas Safavi relating to *sulh-kul.*

It does, however, contain two of Akbar's pronouncements on abstaining from marriage and from meat-eating, and concludes with the following evaluation of Akbar's political policy:

> "A proof of the far-sightedness of this celebrated king was that he employed in his service men of all races—Firangis, Jews, Iranis, and Turanis—since if they had all been of one race, they would have been disposed to rebellion, as was the case with the Uzbegs, and the Qizilbashes, who dethroned their *sultans.* But Shah 'Abbas I (1581-1629) son of Sultan Muhammad Khudabandah (1578-81), gave his patronage to the Georgians and paid no attention to lineage, promoting men of excellence and good manners irrespective of birth."[1]

From the above it would seem that the author of the *Dabistan i-Mazahib* did not have access to any new source entitling him to speak with authority on the subject. The account of the discussions held in the presence of Akbar is imaginary and the *hakim* does not represent Akbar, as M. L. Roychaudhury and some other scholars believe. That the *hakim* is not Akbar is proved by the fact that Akbar himself is made to round off the last discussion in which the philosopher propounded the ten virtues of reason. Scholars using the *Dabistan i-Mazahib* in the English translation of David Shea and Anthony Troyer may be misled by their rendering of *namus i-akbar* as Akbar the Wise;[2] when in fact this does not designate the Emperor Akbar. *Namus* from the Greek *nomos*, meaning "law" or "harmony governing some domain," and also possibly related to the Arabic root *nms*, meaning "concealed," is interpreted differently by Muslim scholars. In early Islamic works *namus i-akbar* represents the Angel Gabriel; and some use it in the sense of *shari'a* and others in the sense of

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[1] David Shea and Anthony Troyer, *The Dabistan*, III (London, 1843), pp. 84-85.

"reason." The *Rasa'il* of the *Ikhwan al-Safa* use *namus* in the sense of "Divine law"[1] and the philosophers in general interpret it as being laws made by a government which are conducive to the furtherance of good and happiness. In the preface to the *Akbar Nama*, Abu'l Fazl has used it in the sense of the Archangel Gabriel.[2] In the *A'in i-Akbari*, he says that ancient works on philosophy make a distinction between the *namus i-akbar* and the *namus i-asghar*, the former being "reason" and the latter "gold."[3] The *Dabistan* clearly defines *namus i-akbar* as *hazrat i-'aql* (the Master, reason) and uses the formula of reverence *'alai-hi's-salam* (Peace be upon him) which is added after the name of any prophet.

Moreover Akbar's way of thinking was an amalgam of both discursive reasoning and intellectual intuition, and the *hakim's* speech does not wholly conform with this. Like the *hakim*, Akbar did not reject the prophets and their teachings, but respected all prophets and sages. His *sulh-kul*, came into being for political and humanitarian reasons. The regulations he circulated to all officers of the imperial domain were intended to remind them that the duties of royalty and command were of a caretaking nature and that it was imperative that no officer interfered with the people's religions and creeds. For, as he said, "inasmuch as a wise man did not act so as to bring loss upon himself in the transitory world, how in the world of religion, which is permanent and eternal, should he knowingly bring about his own ruin?"[4] The ethical teaching imparted to the disciples did not differ from the orders embodied in his circular to all officers.

The Din Ilahi was not "a monument of Akbar's folly," as Smith[5] says, neither was it "monotheistic Parsi-Hinduism" as Blochmann[6] interprets it, nor was it "a sort of Parsi-Sufi-Hinduism" as Von Noer calls it. It was not a religion and was not even a mystic order. Akbar's religious leadership was limited to preventing the orthodox Sunni 'Ulama from using the state to serve their own ends. His most significant departure from earlier practices was to stop the state from becoming an instrument monopolized by the orthodox Muslim community. This deviated from the ideal of scholars and saints such as Mushtaqi, who appreciated only a situation in which:

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[1] *EI*, III, old, pp. 844-46.

[2] *AN*, I, p. 9.

[3] *A'in*, I, p. 10; Blochmann, p. 17.

[4] In another saying he observes, "It is my duty to be in good understanding with all men. If they walk in the way of God's will, interference with them would be itself reprehensible; and if otherwise, they are under the malady of ignorance and deserve my compassion." Jarrett, III, pp. 430-31.

[5] *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 222.

[6] Blochmann, p. 47.

> Muslims should hold the upper hand, and Hindus be docile.[1]

What seemed scandalous to the orthodox Sunnis was not that Hindus were tolerated, but the unbearable situation which elevated them from being "obedient to Islam"[2] to the status of an equal partner in the administration of the empire. It was this that prompted them to denounce Akbar's social ethics and administrative institutions as *bida'* (innovations) of the worst type, and to wrongly accuse him of being an apostate and a heretic—the two most effective weapons of accusation in the armoury of the orthodox. Finding that even these failed them, they indicted him for inventing a religion and even trying to become God.

In actual fact, the recruitment of an elite group who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for their Emperors was a very ancient practice of the Irani ruling houses. One such elite group was the *gyan-aspar*, under the Sasanids (*c.* 225-651). The provincial dynasties of Iran which ruled from the 10th to the 13th centuries could flourish only as long as the Turkic *ghulams* (slaves) offered their devoted loyalty to their masters; once the ambitions of the *ghulams* gained the upper hand the downfall of the dynasties followed. The Safavids (1501-1736), too, rose to power by developing a corps of devoted fighters who did not hesitate to put their Emperor's interests before their own. The martial elite of Iranian tradition belonged to the religions of its master; but under Akbar's government, based as it was on the principles of *sulh-kul*, the elite had to be ready to sacrifice their religious prejudices and interests, if so demanded. The declaration of Mirza Jani Beg, who had newly entered the Court and was keen to demonstrate his loyalty, was written, if at all, on an over-enthusiastic impulse; we know of no such written declaration being obtained from any one else. The elite were supposed to be the Emperor's disciples, in a lay sense, and only a very negligible minority of orthodox

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[1] *Supra*, pp. 251-54, 439-44.

[2] *Supra*, p. 228-89

Sunnis who attached some religious importance to the institution of discipleship took exception to it; others willingly called themselves *murids*. This would thus mean either that those who, from the time of Akbar to the time of Aurangzeb, called themselves *murids*, all belonged to the Din Ilahi, or that none of them did. The latter is the more reasonable view, since no new religion or religious order had in fact been invented.

CHAPTER 11

VIEWS OF MEN BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF THE DIN ILAHI

The four degrees of devotion demanded readiness to sacrifice life, property, religion and honour in furthering the Emperor's political and military interests. However, once the Emperor had convinced himself that his high dignitaries were not going to allow concern for their own affairs to override his interests, no further trial was made. Loyalty to the imperial interests was thus tested in actual situations which appeared to be threats to the life, property, religion and honour of a high dignitary. The question put to Man Singh was an exception, dictated by the special circumstances of the situation; and Mirza Jani Beg's declaration was a case of over-enthusiasm on the part of a newcomer to the Court.[1] Similar enthusiasm seems to have been evinced by others who were too keen to prove their loyalty. For example, Raja 'Ali Khan told Faizi that he had made his life a sacrifice for the Emperor and was ready to perform thousands of *sijdahs* for him.[2] Here the word "sacrifice" was used in a metaphorical rather than a literal sense. We have already discussed the religious thinking of Abu'l Fazl, and now an analysis of the religious views of other Muslim members of the so-called Din Ilahi will show that not one of them ceased to hold religious beliefs in accordance with his own understanding of Islam.

The first is Shaikh Mubarak, whose religious views and contributions to the religious and intellectual history of the period, have been discussed earlier. Smith identifies him as the most distinguished old Shaikh of Bartoli whom Akbar sent to proclaim in all quarters that "in a short time the [religious] law to be professed throughout the Mughal empire was going to be announced."[3] Recording Shaikh Mubarak's death in 1593, Smith calls him the real founder of the Divine Faith,[1] but as far as Shaikh Mubarak himself is concerned, there was no new departure in his religious thinking and practice from 1579 to his death.

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[1] *Supra*, pp. 416-18.

[2] *Lata'if i-Faiyazi*, f. 99b.

[3] *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 212.

He visited the Emperor on rare ceremonial occasions, and, as Badauni says, never went to the houses of nobles. Towards the end of his life, when his sight failed him and he was unable to read, he went into retirement and dictated a commentary on the Qur'an in four large volumes, similar to the *Tafsir-i-Kabir*,[2] named the *Manba'u-Nafa'isi'l-'Uyun*.[3] Badauni adds:

> "The strange thing is, that in the exordium of that commentary he wrote certain passages which seem to show his pretension to be the *mujaddid* (Renovator) of the new [Islamic] century, and the *tajdid* (innovation) contained therein can very well be imagined."[4]

No copy of the *Tafsir* is extant, but Badauni's observations tend to show that it was different from the traditional ones, expressing results of the author's 70 and more years of study. In it he may have tried to call his vast knowledge of peripatetic, *sufic* and *ishraqi* thinking in aid of a new orientation to Quranic exegesis.

While completing this monumental work, he used to remind himself of what he owed to God by constantly reciting the

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[1] *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 248.

[2] *al-Tafsir al-kabir* (edited Bulaq, 1279-89/1862-72), 6 vols., (Cairo, 1310-1892); 8 vols (reprinted many times) also known as *Mafatih al-ghayb*, is the most important contribution of Imam Fakhru'd Din Razi (1149-1209). G.C. Anawati says, "Certain detractors of philosophy and of *kalam*, such as Ibn Taymiyya for example, speak with disdain of this commentary on the Kur'an where everything is to be found except a commentary. To this, admirers of al-Razi reply that in addition to the commentary on the Kur'an everything else is to be found there.... The influence of al-Razi's commentary has made itself felt amongst those who would like to modernize certain aspects of traditional exegesis." (*EI*, new, II, p. 754).

[3] The source of excellent fountains.

[4] *MT*, III, p. 74; Haig, p. 119. He means to say that the *Tajdid* was Din-Ilahi or something else un-Islamic in it. Neither he nor other orthodox care to define blasphemous elements in any the king or work.

Qasida i-Fariziyya[1] in *Ta* and the *Qasida i-Burda*[2] by Ka'b bin Zuhair, and other *qasidas* which he had committed to memory. The recitation of these *qasidas*, particularly *Qasida i-Burda*, shows his great faith in *munajat* and sufi forms of prayer.

In his old age, he seems to have expressed a desire to go on pilgrimage to the tombs of the prophets and saints. Abu'l Fazl's letter, discouraging his father from undertaking the journey is not dated. The earlier letter in the *Mukatabat* addressed to Shaikh Mubarak is dated Jamada I 994/30 May 1586. If Shaikh Mubarak intended to go on pilgrimage, he would have been over eighty years of age and Abu'l Fazl naturally feared he might die on the way. To discourage him, Abu'l Fazl wrote that travellers along the path of Reality were not permitted to visit the ruins of a house and those who had sought retirement by devoting themselves to the heart were not allowed to go round water and clay etc., the (Ka'bah). Yet he begged his father's pardon for being too busy to arrange his proposed journey, saying that otherwise he would have done all he could to meet his wishes.[3]

The religious thinking of Faizi is even more perplexing. Badauni and the enemies of the family criticise him bitterly for holding heretical views. Professor 'Aziz Ahmad accuses him of flattery of "composing *ghazals* rhyming in *Allah u-Akbar*."[4] He begins a *qasida* about himself, his father and his brother with the line:

> "Thanks be to God that the love of idols is my guide,
> I am of the religion of Brahmans and of the faith of the fire-worshippers."[5]

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[1] A *qasidah* in which the rhyming words end in the letter *ta*.

[2] In 9/6300 Ka'b bin Zuhair, son of the celebrated poet and author of the *Mu'allaqa*, recited his famous poem *Banat Su'ad* (Su'ad Has Gone). These verses so impressed the Prophet that he threw over the poet's shoulders his own striped Yemen cloak, the *burda*, whence the name given to this *qasida*. Basset says, "The Banat Su'ad has nothing of a religious poem; it is inspired with the sentiments of pagan poetry." (*EI*, old, II, p. 584). The orthodox looked upon the *qasida* with great respect and recited it when asking for blessings. For English translation see R.A. Nicholson, *Translation of Eastern Poetry and Prose* (Cambridge, 1922).

[3] *MA*, II, p. 87.

[4] *Studies in Islamic Culture*, p. 175.

[5] *Kulliyat i-Faizi* (Lahore, 1967), p. 53.

He then goes on to define idols, brahmans, fire-worship and idol temple on the lines laid down by Shabistari[1] and other sufi poets. However, some of his contemporaries took what Faizi said literally and considered the verse challenging, and one of them, Nishani of Delhi, wrote a long answer which Badauni quoted in full:

' 'Thanks be to God that I am a follower of the faith of the
Prophet,
The love of the Prophet and of the house of the prophet is
my guide."[2]

Badauni seeks to belittle Faizi's account of *mi'raj* in the *Nal-Daman* by telling his readers that Faizi only wrote it at the earnest request of some friends,[3] that really he did not believe in Muhammad or Islam, and that he was a pillar of the so called Din Ilahi. According to Badauni, Faizi sent to scholars in India and Iran complimentary copies of his *diwan*, which contains the verses of his maturity.[4] These survive, spell out

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[1] E.H. Whinfield, *Gulshan i-Raz*, pp. 70-93. The following example would illustrate the point :

Question XV

Idols, girdles and Christianity in this discourse,
Are all infidelity; if not, say what they are?

Answer XV

Here the idol is the evidence of love and unity,
The girdle is the binding of the bond of obedience.
Since infidelity and faith are both based on Being,
Idol worship is essentially Unification.
Since Being is manifest in all things,
One amongst them must be an idol.

Gulshan i-Raz, p. 83.

Faizi asks,

What is an idol, the portrayed face of the agreeable *Ma'ni* (Reality).
For in a chruch my secret thoughts are concealed.

[2] *MT*, III, p. 453; Haig, III, p. 484.

Badauni gives a long account of Maulana 'Ali Ahmad Nishani, but Abu'l Fazl and Nizamu'd Din Ahmad don't include him among the poets of Akbar's reign. Abu'l Fazl considered him to be an expert in seal-cutting; he held a *mansab* of 1000. He was a very intimate friend of Badauni, who thought him "deeply read in astronomy and natural philosophy and an ardent seeker after knowledge." (*MT*, III, pp. 350-56; Haig, III, pp. 480-89).

[3] *Supra*, pp. 216-17.

[4] *MT*, III, pp. 285, 301; Haig, III, pp. 394, 416.

Faizi's views in detail, and prove that Badauni's charges against him are false and malicious.

Faizi's approach to God and Reality is similar to Abu'l Fazl's, but what distinguishes Faizi from his brother is his verses in praise of Muhammad, the Khulafa i-Rashidun and the twelve Imams. He regards Adam as the prologue and Muhammad as the epilogue of the book of Prophethood.[1] In a *qasida* on the eminence of man and other exhortations, he addresses Muhammad as Ahmad i-Mursal (Ahmad the Prophet) and describes him as endowed with the highest qualities of humanity. Faizi goes on to say that the angels learn (the lessons) of ethical values from Muhammad. In the following verse he adds that Muhammad is so holy that the stars and heavens learn the lesson of purity from that pure element i.e. Muhammad.[2]

In another *qasida*, he writes ten verses in praise of Prophet Muhammad and affirms his faith in him in a very challenging style. He says:

> Stars and heavens would mock our wisdom,
>
> Were we not to recognise the great personality of whom God said:
>
> "But for thee the world would not have been called out of non-existence."[3]

And again:

> Let both worlds be dark before our eyes
> If we do not recognise the countenance of that moon (Muhammad) in the darkness.[4]

After praising Muhammad he returns thanks for being the follower of the companions of Muhammad and recognising them as his great guide to *shari'a*.[5] He refers to Abu Bakr as the leader of truth and purity. Of 'Umar he says that if he did not recognise that promoter of justice and annihilator of oppression, he would receive no justice on the great day of judgment. He speaks of 'Ali in several *qasidas*. In the one from which the verses above were quoted, he asserts:

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[1] *Kulliyat i-Faizi*, p. 11, verse no. 9. [2] *Ibid*, p. 23, verse no. 9.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 19, verse no. 1. [4] *Ibid*, p. 19, verse no. 3.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 19, verses no. 10-13.

Let the chain of eternal punishment be round our neck,
If we do not recognise the progeny of the Lion of God ('Ali)

Praising the remaining eleven Imams, he uses the traditional Shi'i epithets, About the twelfth Imam he writes:

O Faizi! Let me meet my end on the wrong path,
If I do not recognise the last of the rightly guided Imams.

In a *qasida* about 'Ali's attitude to the question of the caliphate after Muhammad, Faizi expresses a typically Shi'ite view. Addressing 'Ali as the *wasi* (executor of Muhammad's will) of the Prophet, he writes:

An Imam who on the day of the death of the Prophet,
Forsakes the Caliphate and engages himself in mourning.[1]

As regards the tradition that 'Ali mounted the shoulders of Muhammad and broke the idols in the Ka'bah, Faizi makes it clear that he personally values the imprint of 'Ali's foot higher than the seal of the Prophet upon which 'Ali placed it.[2] After writing twenty verses in praise of 'Ali he reiterates:

O King of warriors ('Ali), the world has become full of calamity,
you should reappear so that the confusion of the world
should subside.[3]

And lastly he writes with great pride:

Because of the blessing of your nearness,
Faizi is always honoured when he walks and respected where
he sits.[4]

His encomiums both on 'Ali and the *Khulfa i-Rashidun* seem incompatible to orthodox Sunnis and Shi'is but accord with the views of the *Tafziliya* Sunnis and the *ishraqis* who, unlike orthodox Shi'is, respect the *Khulfa' i-Rashidun* but nevertheless consider 'Ali to be superior to all other companions of the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, Faizi's faith in *sulh-kul* had made him indifferent to the sectarian controversies of Shi'i Iran and Sunnite Turkey, Transoxiana and India. His letters to Akbar from the Deccan ridicule both Sunnis and Shi'is for their fanaticism and bigotry.[1]

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[1] *Kulliyat i-Faizi*, p. 40, verses no. 13-15.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 40, verse no. 17.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 41, verse no. 7.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 41, verse no. 14.

What he strongly disliked in religion was mechanical and formal religious worship. In one verse he cries out that all those who stop him from worshipping idols violate their own advice by going round the doors and the walls of the Ka'bah. He does not advocate the destruction of the Ka'bah, although he thinks it is not the ultimate destination of the seekers of God, but only their temporary residence.[2] He describes the evolution of his religious thoughts in the Nal-Daman as follows:

> "Now that I have spent forty-nine years in this monastery [the world],
> I have passed by the seventy-two sects [of Islam],
> My meeting-place has been in the idol-temples of India,
> The fire-temples of Persia have been in my heart
> With a hundred incantations and magical devices,
> Have I cleaned from the king-like mirror of the heart the scum of rust."[3]

In Faizi's *diwan* there are eighteen *qasidas* glorifying Akbar.[4] Some verses in other *qasidas* and *ghazals* refer to Akbar directly and indirectly but the *qasida* with the rhyming *Allah u-Akbar* does not allude to Akbar at all. There is no *ghazal* with the rhyme *Allah u-Akbar*. 'Aziz Ahmad, in accusing Faizi of flattery by composing *ghazals* using *Allah u-Akbar* as a rhyme, must rely on some secondary authority.

Faizi's *qasidas* about Akbar are replete with the same extravagant exaggerations and hyperboles which are the very breath of life to Persian poets. He goes to the extent of claiming that had Akbar not come to the throne, there would have been no rains or grass.[5] The use of the word *Allah u-Akbar* in several *qasidas* is most interesting and no opportunity has been lost to play upon the word 'Akbar' which means 'great' but was also the name of the Emperor. Akbar definitely encouraged his officials, admirers and friends to use this combination in their wordings and *Allah u-Akbar* continued to be used as a superscription on all *farmans* to the end of Shah Jahan's reign. As even many of Akbar's worst enemies did not believe that he claimed godhead for himself Faizi is simply playing upon the phrase in a most elegant and meaningful manner. In one verse he says:

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[1] *Lata'if*, ff. 118a.

[2] Shibli Nu'mani, *Shi'ru'l 'Ajam*, III (A'zamgarh, 1945), pp. 69- 70.

[3] *MT*, III, p. 308; Haig, III, p. 426.

[4] *Kulliyat i-Faizi*, pp. 29-31, 34, 35-38, 42-53, 59-64, 73, 84-95, 98-102, 106, 112-121, 139-40, 142-145.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 82, verse no. 4.

All day and night I repeat Allah u-Akbar,
So that my own name might be elevated to great felicity.[1]

Similarly a word such as *Jalal* (Majesty) is used ambiguously to allude both to a divine attribute and the title of the Emperor, Jalal'ud-Din. The ambiguous use of the word Akbar helped him overcome crises in extempore verse competitions. For example, Shah 'Abbas Safavi once sent a letter to Akbar which contained the following verses:

Zangi (the negro) prides himself upon his army, horse, and foot,
Rumi (the Turk) boasts of his spear, sword and dagger;
Akbar is proud of his treasure-house full of gold,
The pride of 'Abbas is *Zu'l-faqar* (name of 'Ali's sword).[2]

These verses were taken as sneering at Akbar's affluence, but Faizi immediately made the following witty retort:

Paradise prides itself on its streams: Salsabil and Kausar,
The sea boasts of its pearls, the sky of its stars;
'Abbas takes pride in the sword of 'Ali,
The object of pride to both worlds is the pure self of Akbar,
(*zat i-pak i-Akbar*).[3]

"Akbar" here can be taken as "the greatest," namely God, or as the Emperor.

Like Abu'l Fazl, Faizi ardently advocates serving Akbar sincerely. He says:

Asceticism and piety are not impediments to serving the Sultan,
Devote your heart to God and gird up your loins for service.[4]

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[1] *Kulliyat i-Faizi*, p. 63, verse no. 10.

[2] A. Ghani, *A History of Persian Language and Literature at the Mughal Court* (Allahabad, 1929-30), p. 64.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 65.

[4] *Kulliyat i-Faizi*, p. 134, verse no. 16.

This remained the ideal of life for both brothers and their religion is summed up in the following verse:

The infidel is right in his idol worship and the Muslim in venerating the Ka'bah.
You are different from both, neither a Muslim nor an infidel.[1]

Indeed Faizi's rejection of the *taqlid*, in conjunction with his faith in the intellectual intuition of the *ishraqis*, made him entirely different from the orthodox Sunnis and the Shi'is of his day and an enigma to all of them, since they regarded any departure from their own views of orthodoxy as infidel. Even Faizi's Quranic commentary in Arabic did not satisfy the orthodox Sunnis. Badauni and his followers never ceased accusing him of writing it for the sole purpose of retrieving his reputation, alleging that he wrote it without performing ablutions, and that his dogs used to run over the completed sheets.[2] Burning with holy zeal, Badauni adds:

> "All Jews, Christians, Hindus, and fire-worshippers not to speak of Nizaris[3] and Sabahis,[4] held him in the very highest honour for his heresy, his enmity to the followers of Islam, his reviling of the very fundamental doctrines of our faith, his contemptuous abuse of the noble companions (of the Prophet) and those who came after them, and holy Shaikhs both dead and living, and his unmannerly and contemptuous behaviour towards all learned, pious, and excellent men, both in secret and openly, and both by day and night are well known."[5]

The works of Faizi, and his treatment of orthodox Sunnis and even of Badauni himself, show that these accusations emerge mainly from the personal frustrations and narrow views of his detractors.[6] It is little wonder then that the orthodox vented their spleen on him after his death by writing defamatory chronograms such as:

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[1] *Kulliyat i-Faizi*, p. 135, verse no. 13.

[2] *MT*, III, p. 300; Haig, III, p. 414.

[3] The Isma'ilis of Iran who flourished under the guidance of Hasan bin Sabbah, who claimed to be the descendant of Nizar, son of al-Mustansir.

[4] The followers of Hasan bin Sabbah.

[5] *MT*, III, pp. 299-300; Haig, III, p. 413.

[6] *Supra*, pp. 332-34.

> "When Faizi the atheist died, an eloquent man uttered (as the
> date of his death) the words,
> A dog has gone from the world in an abominable state."[1]

Badauni's history makes a puzzle of the religious views of the Khan i-A'zam Mirza 'Aziz Koka, who, according to Badauni became a *murid* after his return from Mecca in September 1594. He says:

> "At this time A'zam Khan returned from Mecca, where he had suffered much harm at the hands of the Sherifs. Throwing away [his former] contempt (for worldly authority), immediately on his return he joined the *silsila* (line or chain) of the *murids*, performing the *sijdah*, and following all the other rules of discipleship and *ikhlas* (devotion). He cut off his beard, and was to the forefront in all conversations and in endorsing (Akbar's) views. Ghazipur and Hajipur (Eastern India) were assigned to him in *jagir* and he learnt the principles of the new religion from the revered, 'Allami (Abu'l Fazl)."[2]

As already pointed out,[3] the reasons for Mirza 'Aziz's estrangement from Akbar were mainly personal and political but he tried to give a religious colouring to them and even grew a beard. This estrangement led to considerable excitement among orthodox Sunnis, and Badauni rightly voices their feelings when he calls Mirza 'Aziz's departure to Mecca an act of great renunciation and self-sacrifice for the sake of religion equal to the abandonment of the world by the famous ascetic Sultanu't-Tarikin (Prince of the recluses) Ibrahim ibn Adham.[4] Mirza 'Aziz's caustic remarks about Mecca and the anecdotes he used to narrate about the life there, horrified them. Just as he had previously denounced Akbar's irreligiousness, he now seems to have become most outspoken in taking the opposite view by asserting the importance of the Four Degrees of Devotion.

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[1] *MT*, III, p. 300; Haig, III, p. 414.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 398; Haig, II, p. 412.

[3] *Supra*, p. 198

[4] He belonged to Balkh, and died between 776 and 783. Legends about him show that he was ascetic and quietist. The sufis believe that he was a prince of Balkh who, like Buddha, renounced the world after receiving certain warnings during one of his hunting expeditions.

Thus readers of Badauni's *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh* would not be unjustified in assuming that Mirza 'Aziz came to call himself a *murid* after his return from Mecca. Abu'l Fazl and other authorities say nothing about it, but on a seal dated 1001 H/1591-92, his name is inscribed as Koka Mirza Khan *murid* i-Akbar Shah.[1] This clearly shows that he was the *murid* or disciple of the Emperor, before leaving for Mecca early in 1593, and no change in this respect took place after his return.

When in April 1595 Khan i-A'zam was made the *Wakil*, this was the final realization of his dreams, giving him the power whose loss had originally driven him to Mecca. He was expected to become an ardent follower of the *sulh-kul*—but neither as a *murid* nor as a *Wakil* did he give up his independent religious views on Islam. He did not like bigotry, never tolerating the authoritarianism either of religious dignitaries or of Akbar, but in his heart he remained an orthodox Sunni. When Akbar, at the request of Father Antoine Machado and Benoit de Goes, ordered a *farman* to be issued in 1602 permitting the Fathers to convert to Christianity anyone who wished it, Khan i-A'zam, like other orthodox Muslims, strongly opposed the order and seems never to have signed it.[2] Probably it was sealed and signed by the Emperor's own hand.

After the death of Khan i-A'zam's mother, Jiji Anaga, in May 1600, Akbar shaved his head, moustache and eyebrows as a sign of grief according to the rules of Chingiz Khan, and though he tried to ensure, says Abu'l Fazl ,"that none should share except Jiji's children, his faithful servants followed suit."[3] The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* does not contain any account of events happening after October 1595, so we are deprived of Badauni's comments on the incident. However, he would not have hesitated to allege that this was done in pursuance of the rules of the *Din Ilahi*.

Badauni's biting criticism of all three *sadrs* who succeeded Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi has generally been taken at face value, but of all the elites who supported Akbar, the *sadrs* were the main targets of his attack. Even Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi and his predecessors were not spared of his criticism. We have already referred to the contribution made by Sultan Khwaja, Fathu'llah

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[1] *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar* (Simla, 1967), p. 62.

[2] *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. 158.

[3] *AN*, III, p. 771; Bev, III, p. 1153.

Shirazi and Sadr i-Jahan of Pihani in implementing the policy of Akbar in the award of *madad i-ma'ash* grants, thereby frustrating the expectations of all the orthodox Muslims, who lost many of their privileges as a consequence. Badauni suffered too, and considered that Akbar's policy of *sulh-kul* was at the root of his own economic difficulties and sufferings. Curiously enough, however, Badauni does not include Mir Fathu'llah Shirazi among the members of the Din Ilahi; it seems that he thought that nothing could more damage the reputation of both the Mir and Akbar in the eyes of the orthodox Sunnis than the claim that the Mir performed Shi'i prayers openly at Court, and that Akbar's Sunnism was not offended at all by this.

Sultan Khwaja, son of Khawand Dust and a disciple of Khwaja 'Abdu'sh Shahid, belonged to the Naqshbandi order, and therefore, ranked as a patron saint among the Turks and the Mughals, for most of them were strongly devoted to Khwaja 'Ubaidu'llah's descendants. To the ordinary Muslim he was a *hajji* (pilgrim to Mecca) and a leader of the largest caravan of the pilgrims to Mecca and thus an object of great veneration. Unlike many other sufis he did not concern himself with the rivalries of different orders and was friendly with Chishtis such as Shaikh Ibrahim. His greatest sin in the eyes of Badauni was his loyalty and devotion to Akbar. For he knew that the Four Degrees of Devotion and the institution of discipleship had no religious significance, and did not hesitate to advocate them, thus providing Badauni with an opportunity to call him one of the *muridan i-khass u'l-khass* (the choicest among the special disciples).[1] However, Badauni nowhere mentions Sultan Khwaja as practising any religious innovation. The special type of grave which, according to Badauni, was constructed for him after his death, has already been discussed. The following cryptic sentence, however, distorts the truth:

> "And they say that his mouth was also touched with flames, but God knows best the truth of the matter."[2]

Equally interesting are the religious views of Miran Sadr i-Jahan who, from the time of his appointment as *sadr* upto the death of Akbar, enthusiastically implemented Akbar's policy of *sulh-kul* by making rentfree grants and awarding stipends in accordance with prescribed rules. Indeed he carried on the same policy in Jahangir's reign until 1616-17, when he died. In granting *madad i-ma'ash* to Hindus, he seems to have been even more liberal than Abu'l Fazl; for example, in 1597 Abu'l Fazl proposed that only seventy-eight *bighas* of land be given to Udant Nath Jogi but on Miran Sadr i-Jahan's recommendation 100 *bighas* were awarded.[1]

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 340; Lowe, II, p. 351.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 340; Lowe, II, pp. 351-52.

In 1591 he was seen drinking wine with Mir 'Abdu'l Ha'i, the *Mir 'Adl*, leading Akbar himself to quote the following verse of Hafiz:

In the era of the fault-forgiving king,
The *qazi* drained flagons, the *mufti* quaffed cups.[2]

Naturally he could not escape Badauni, who denounces him in the following anecdote:

> "At the time when it was noised abroad in Lahor that those who remained of the 'ulama were to be banished to Makkah[3] the glorious, and that a list of them had been prepared, the Sadr i-Jahan said one day, "I fear lest I may have been included in this class." Mirza Nizamu'd Din Ahmad, who had prepared the list said, "Why should you be sent to Makkah?" The Sadr i-Jahan asked the Mirza why he expressed surprise, and the Mirza replied, 'you have never given utterance to God's words, that you should be worthy of this banishment."[4]

Sadr i-Jahan does not seem to have inscribed *murid* on his seals, preferring to add the word *banda* or *'abd* (slave) to his name.[5]

Two provincial *sadrs* also appear in Blochmann's list of adherents of the Din Ilahi. They are Mir Sharif of Amul and Mulla Shah Muhammad of Shahabad. According to Badauni, Sharif of Amul changed his religion several times, for some time residing at Balkh in the *khanqah* of Maulana Muhammad Zahid, the grandson of Shaikh Husain Khwarazmi who followed the practices of Mahmud of Basakhwan,[6] a contemporary of Timur and an author of thirteen treatises, the most important of these being *Bahr u-Kuzah*. Badauni describes his works as loathsome nonsense. On the basis of the above works Sharif wrote *Tarashshuh Zuhur* in the style of the works of Mir 'Abdu'l Awwal.[1]

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[1] *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, p. 60.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 582; Bev, III, p. 881.

[3] Thorough enquiries about 'ulama were made during Akbar's expedition to Kabul. *Supra*, pp. 283-84.

[4] *MT*, III, p. 141; Haig, III, p. 199.

[5] *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, p. 82.

[6] The word is also spelt "Basakhan" and "Masajwan" (Blochmann, p. 502, note no. 2).

Persecuted and hounded from place to place for his unorthodox religious views Sharif Amuli reached the Deccan only to be disgraced and expelled. He then reached Malwa and became very friendly with the Iraqis who, as Badauni's tirades against them show, were Shi'is. There Sharif Amuli created a furore by claiming that he was the *mujaddid* of the tenth Islamic century and his Iraqi disciples gave his claim wide publicity. Early in 1577 Akbar granted him an interview at Dipalpur and took him in to his confidence.[2] Sharif Amuli became Akbar's staunch supporter.

In 1580, he joined certain other scholars in proving that the Lord of the Age (*Sahib i-Zaman*) was going to appear in 990/1582.[3] Badauni says, that his arguments were based on a treatise of Mahmud of Basakhwan. We don't know of his activities during the next six years, but it seems that he actively participated in the religious and intellectual activities of the Court. Early in 1586, according to the *Akbar Nama*, he was appointed *sadr* of Kabul[4] and in the following year he served under Raja Man Singh.[5] In 1587 he was appointed a member of the commission of the revenue assessment for Kashmir and was ordered to distribute money to the recluses and ascetics of Srinagar.[6] In 1591 he was made *amin*, *sadr* and *qazi* of Bengal, three different offices being combined in his person. It is this extraordinary promotion of Sharif Amuli which makes Badauni exceedingly angry. He says:

> "He is now a commander of one thousand and is one of the *da'is*[7] of the true religion in Bengal, possessor of the four

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[1] It is not clear if Badauni is here referring to Saiyid 'Abdu'l Awwal, the author of *Farid al-Bari* (a commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*), who was friendly with Bairam Khan, at whose invitation he had settled in Delhi, where he died in 1560-61. (Storey, pp. 192-93).

[2] *MT*, II, p. 245-47; Lowe, II, pp. 252-54.

[3] *Ibid*, 287; *Ibid*, p. 295.

[4] *AN*, III, p. 477; Bev, III, p. 718. Akbar might have presumed that as Amul was a town on the Oxus, Sharif would be popular in Kabul.

[5] *AN*, III, p. 513; Bev, III, p. 781.

[6] *Ibid*, p. 557; *Ibid*, p. 846.

[7] One who invites; the term has special significance for Isma'ilis, and might have been used by Badauni for that reason.

> degrees of devotion, and, acting as the deputy of His Majesty, initiates the faithful disciples to these degrees."[1]

We have not been able to lay hands on the writings of Sharif Amuli; only a few letters written by him are available.[2] They show him to be a devout sufi and a good scholar. Mirza Nizamu'd Din Ahmad describes him as one of the *muwahhids*[3] and endowed with a good knowledge of *sufism*.[4] Five letters written to him[5] by Abu'l Fazl between 1000/1591-92 and 1002/1593-94 tend to indicate that he was a man of ascetic temperament, and considered the imperial service as a great impediment in the way of his spiritual and scholarly life; and that Abu'l Fazl had persistently to convince him that service was no obstacle to the spiritual life.[6] Jahangir, whose reviews of the character of the officials of his father's reign are generally objective, says:

> "I promoted Sharif Amuli, raising his original rank to 2500. He is an exceedingly pure-hearted and lively-spirited man. As he is not well versed in formal learning, he often expresses lofty thoughts and excellent statements on spiritual matters. In the dress of a recluse and an ascetic he had travelled a lot and had lived in the company of a large number of saints. He talks on subjects relating to sufism, and this is *qal* (theoritical) and not *hal* (ecstasy) with him. In the time of my father he relinquished the garments of poverty and asceticism, and attained to *amirship* and chiefship. His utterance is infinitely powerful, and his conversation is remarkably eloquent and pure, although his knowledge of Arabic is poor. His compositions also are not devoid of elegance (*namak*)."[7]

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[1] Lowe's translation is confusing. He writes:
"...and one of the apostles of His Majesty's religion in Bengal, possessor of the four degrees of Faith, and in turn summoning faithful disciples to these degrees." *MT*, II, p. 248; Low, II, p. 255.

[2] *Majmu'a*, *Asiatic Society Bengal, Concise Descriptive Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts* by W. Ivanow (Calcutta, 1924), p. 417.

[3] A unitarian.

[4] *Tabaqat*, p. 451.

[5] *MT*, II, pp. 201-05.

[6] *MT*, II, p. 204.

[7] *Tuzuk*, p. 22; *R. & B*, I, pp. 47-48.

Through him Jahangir distributed money to the poor, and Sharif in his reign seems to have been an officer of the department of *Sadrs*.[1] It is impossible to reconcile the abuse showered upon Sharif Amuli by Badauni with the observations of independent authorities such as Nizamu'd Din Ahmad and Jahangir, and history, therefore, can pass no harsh judgement against Sharif Amuli and the denunciations made by historians on the authority of what Badauni has to say about him, are unjust.

Likewise Mulla Shah Muhammad stands strongly condemned in Badauni's history. Abu'l Fazl calls him a *murid*,[2] and Badauni includes him in the list of those confirmed in the Four Degrees of Devotion in 1004/1595. He was Badauni's colleague in the Translation Bureau and translated the *Rajatarangini* into Persian. In introducing Mulla Shah Muhammad's work, Badauni refers to him as an encyclopaedia (*Jami'*) of *ma'qul* (sciences based on reason) and *manqul* (sciences based on tradition).[3] Mentioning his death in 1592, Abu'l Fazl corroborates Badauni in this, saying that the Mulla possessed a knowledge of rational and traditional sciences.[4] His main sin in Badauni's eyes was the loyalty to Akbar for which Abu'l Fazl admires him. But his loyal performance of his duties as a member of the board of provincial *sadrs*[5] to which he was appointed in 989/1581 to enquire into grants to the religious dignitaries of the Punjab was most shocking to Badauni.

As Blochmann understood *iradat* (devotion) and the *Din Ilahi* as one and the same thing, he did not hesitate to include Mirza Ja'far Beg Asaf Khan Qazwini in his list of the members of the Divine faith, for Abu'l Fazl writes that Asaf Khan had succeeded in having his desire of becoming His Majesty's disciple fulfilled.[6] However an analysis of the available details of his life and works show that he always held independent religious views.

After coming to India he started his career as a *mansabdar* of twenty; but made rapid progress, obtaining the title of Asaf Khan, the posts of *mir-bakhshi*, then the governorship of Kashmir, and

[1] *R & B*, I, pp. 61, 81.
[2] *AN*, III, p. 743; Bev, III, p. 1110.
[3] *MT*, II, p. 374; Lowe, II, p. 386.
[4] *AN*, III, p. 743; Bev, III, p. 1110.
[5] *MT*, II, p. 295; Lowe, II, p. 304.
[6] *A'in*, I, p. 173; Blochmann, p. 643.

lastly the *diwan i-kul* and a *mansab* of 2500. Although not friendly with Jahangir during Akbar's lifetime, he continued to be promoted and eventually rose to a *mansab* of 5000 and the post of *wakil*.[1]

He was both a historian and a poet, completed the *Tarikh i-Alfi* and wrote poetry of outstanding merit. His contribution to the *Tarikh i-Alfi* presents Akbar as a far-sighted and benevolent ruler, but his personal views as reflected by the *Tarikh i-Alfi* are orthodox. By exhibiting his talents as a historian in the *Tarikh i-Alfi*, he would have been a natural aspirant for a commission to write the history of Akbar, and thus might have been jealous of Abu'l Fazl. Badauni, who showers fulsome praise on Asaf Khan's poetry, does not criticise his religious views finding fault with him rather for his lack of respect for his uncle, and his love of pleasure and ease.[2] Asaf Khan did not share Badauni's puritanical orthodoxy, but was dogmatic compared with Abu'l Fazl and Faizi. Abu'l Fazl seems to have held a poor opinion of his character, and considered him too fond of mirth and jokes.[3]

Because of his usual wrong understanding of the term *murid*, Blochmann also includes the poet Qasim Kahi in his list of members of the Din Ilahi. Abu'l Fazl says, "Despite his great love of independence he counted himself among the disciples because of the indulgence (*parda ara'i*) of His Majesty."[4] He belonged to the older generation of poets at Akbar's court and was one of the four chronicled by Badauni at the beginning of his biographical dictionary of the poets of Abkar's reign. The three others were Ghazali of Mashhad (died 1572), Khwaja Husain of Marw (left India in 1571-72) and Qasim Arsalan (died 1587).[5] Badauni separated them from the others, arranged alphabetically, both because of their fame as poets and because he purported to consider them responsible for all the misfortunes of his times, although the rest were not spared:

> "All the poets of the present age together, both small and great, are, with the exception of three or four aged men, adhe-

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[1] *R & B*, I, pp. 16, 42, 103.
[2] *MT*, III, p. 216; Haig, pp. 299-300.
[3] *A'in*, I, p. 173; Blochmann, p. 643.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 172; *Ibid*, pp. 643-44.
[5] *MT*, III, pp. 170-81; Haig, pp. 239-53.

rents of the Jaurati[1] (*sic*) and Haidari sects, yet these two (Ghazali of Mashhad and Qasim Kahi) whom I have just mentioned were the guides and leaders of all the rest, and left the heritage of their baseness to their followers and dependants, dividing it among them in due proportion to the natural fitness and ability of each one to avail himself of it, and with due regard to the claims which each had acquired by former companionship with them."[2]

The poets of Akbar's age, whom Badauni so bitterly criticizes did not break any new ground in the realm of heresy; they were imitators of the symbols and allegories of Hafiz, Jami and Shabistari. The licentiousness, antinomian outlook, and indifference to orthodoxy which their verses display, do not indicate any departure from the path of the fourteenth and fifteenth century Persian poetry. Their advocacy of a cosmopolitan outlook and of the advantages of universal concord, although not new to Persian poetry, added a new dimension to the *sulh-kul* (universal concord) of Akbar's reign. Kahi himself was too old to make any further contribution to the process of change taking place in the religious and spiritual atmosphere of the country. But by calling himself the *murid* of the Emperor he seems to have decided to add the weight of his prestige as one of the senior intellectuals of Akbar's age to the furtheranee of the movement of *sulh-kul*.

Even more surprising is the inclusion of the name of Khwaja 'Abdu's Samad, Shirin Qalam (Sweet Pen) in the list of the members of the Din Ilahi. He had met Humayun at Tabriz whence the Emperor was proceeding to Kabul. In 1549-50 he and the celebrated painter Mir Saiyid 'Ali together joined Humayun's court at Kabul.[3] Both 'Abdu's Samad and Saiyid 'Ali were appointed as tutors to teach painting to Akbar and their pupil took more interest in the fine arts than he did in reading and writing. Abu'l Fazl naively suggests that 'Abdu's Samad received perfection, and his paintings real meaning, by means of the elixir of the Emperor's insight,[4] but in fact he was the real founder of Mughal art as distinct from the contemporary Persian art. At the end of 1577 he was made the director of the mints, which, according to Abu'l Fazl, were earlier controlled by the *chaudharis*, apparently the leading Hindu bankers, and the coining of the square rupee was initiated.[1] Five years later, he was appointed to be in charge of leather goods.[2] In 1583 he was ordered to serve under Prince Murad, who was appointed to manage the imperial household,[3] and three years later he was made the *diwan* of Multan.[4] He rose to a *mansab* of 400; Badauni says that Abdu's Samad "wrote the *suratu'l ikhlas*[5] in full, and in a good and legible hand on one side of a poppy seed, and on the other side of it the exegesis of the chapter"[6] obviously an impossible task—but makes no comment upon his religious views. It seems that 'Abdu's Samad was too busy with creative art to involve himself into the religious controversies of his day.

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[1] This may be *Jwalqi*, a category of wandering darveshes.

[2] *MT*, III, p. 176; Haig, III, p. 247.

[3] *BB*, pp. 65-69.

[4] *A'in*, I, p. 77; Blochmann, p. 114.

Taqiu'd Din, or Taqiya, of Shustar is included in the list of the *mansabdars* of 200 in the *A'in i-Akbari*, and in 1601 was the *bakhshi* of the Kabul army. According to Nizamu'd Din Ahmad he was well-versed in the rational and traditional sciences. Badauni praises him for his perfection in the traditional and rational sciences.[7] Of his rendering the *Shah Nama* into prose on the Emperor's orders, he rightly says that the effort amounts to converting fine linen into sackcloth. He also accuses him of adding *jallat 'azmatuhu* (may its greatness be glorified) and *'azza shanuhu* (honoured be its power) to the word sun whenever occurring, although these interjections are reserved for God.[8] No copy of the work is now available and the truth of Badauni's allegation cannot be verified. Jahangir, however, regarded him as a scholar "adorned with excellencies and perfections" and awarded him the title of *Mu'arrikh* (Historian) Khan.

Sufi Ahmad and Gosala were sufis denigrated by Badauni for having joined the imperial service. They held minor posts and no one except Badauni mentions them. Calling Ahmad "Ahmad Sufiyak" (little sufi), Badauni says, that he was the disciple of

[1] *AN*, III, p. 227; Bev, III, pp. 320-21.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 396; *Ibid*, p. 585.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 404; *Ibid*, p. 598.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 511; *Ibid*, p. 779.
[5] Chapter 112 contains four short verses.
[6] *MT*, III, p. 310; Haig, p. 430.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 206; *Ibid*, p. 285.
[8] *MT*, III, p. 206; Haig, p. 286; *MT*, II, p. 404; Lowe, p. 418.

Shaikh Ahmad Bikri of Egypt, and claimed that he was a descendant of Shaikh 'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani and was deputed by his preceptor to protect the Emperor of India, should he make a slip.[1]

Abusing Gosala, Badauni says that on Abu'l Fazl's recommendations he was made a *karori* of Banaras, that both he and Sufi Ahmad fell in love with a prostitute and became rivals. The overseers of the prostitutes and dancing girls complained to the Emperor who punished them both.[2] Their detailed story is described in cryptic sentences in order to show that only worthless men, whether sufis or scholars were Akbar's *murids*.

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[1] *MT*, II, p. 404; Lowe, pp. 418-19.

[2] *Ibid*, II, p. 405; *Ibid*, p. 419.

CHAPTER 12

ASPECTS OF THE ORTHODOX MUSLIM ATTITUDE IN AKBAR'S REIGN

An overwhelming majority of modern scholars in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent believe that but for the leadership of Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi, who claimed to be the *mujaddid*[1] of the second millennium, orthodox Sunnism, if not Islam as a whole in India would have been doomed. Others, a bit inhibited by the fact that no contemporary source exists supporting the above thesis, propound it with more caution. According to them, orthodox Islam, by which they mean orthodox Sunnism, lay dormant from 1580 to the end of the sixteenth century, only regaining confidence after Abu'l Fazl's murder in 1602, and beginning to reassert itself when Akbar was breathing his last. Professor Qureshi, to take one instance out of many, says:

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[1] A tradition ascribed to Prophet Muhammad says, "God will, on the eve of every century, raise a person in this Ummat who will renew the religion." In the sixteenth century this idea found immense popularity because of the support lent to it by the great traditionist Abu'l Fazl 'Abdu'r Rahman Suyuti (died 18 Jumada I 911/17 Oct. 1505), who himself claimed to be a *mujaddid*. The mujdaddids for the last nine centuries were also named although there is a great deal of divergence of opinion as to the correctness of the names. Maulana Abu'l 'Ala' Maududi, a modern Pakistani authority on Sunnism is not happy at the thought that anyone could claim to be a Mahdi. He says, "Let us now consider the claims of Shah Waliu'llah and Mujaddid Sihrindi. I am accused of refusing to believe in the innocence of the eminent religious heads of the past; rather just as I acknowledge the correct statements to be *correct*, so also I do not hesitate in calling a spade a spade. I shudder to be too outspoken in this matter lest another offence be added to the charge sheet against me. But, as one must subordinate fear of the world to fear of God, I cannot help saying, irrespective of what the world says, that it is certainly one of the wrong actions on the part of these two sages to proclaim themselves to be *mujaddids* and repeatedly allege that such claims were justified on the basis of divine revelations and inspirations....If a man is able to render some service towards the renovation of faith, he must ungrudingly do it leaving it to God to judge his actions and to assign him a place accordingly in heaven." (Abu'l 'Ala Maududi, *Tajdid wa Ihya'i-Din*, Rampur, 1954, pp. 161-62).

> "Orthodox Islam could not accept defeat so easily. It took some time in understanding the situation, but once the issues were clearly understood, the response was both intelligent and vigorous ... When Akbar died in 1605, the orthodox elements in the court were strong enough to foil the Rajput scheme of putting Khusraw on the throne and to secure a promise from Jahangir that he would restore the institutions of Islam which had fallen into abeyance under Akbar."[1]

The controversy over Jahangir's accession has been examined in my earlier book, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*;[2] the following pages seek to show that even after the rebellion of the Eastern province in 1580-81, a section of the 'ulama and sufis, the orthodox Sunni elite, the nobles, high officers and the intellectuals did not give up the battle to restore the pre 1579 dominance of Sunni orthodoxy. As far as the questian of ideology was concerned they had little grievance against the Rajputs who played no effective role in religious controversies. Both Ṛaja Bhagwan Das and Man Singh adhered to their own orthodox Hindu views, and were happy for the Muslims to adhere to theirs. Some orthodox Muslims took pride in the fact that the Rajputs "wielded the sword of Islam,"[3] and were concerned lest they became indispensable to political policies. The same was true as regards other Hindu caste groups such as the brahmans, khattris and kayasthas who, along with the Iranis, had become the backbone of the revenue and finance departments and could influence the fate of both the religious and military classes. A similar situation, although on a very minor scale, had arisen earlier and had disturbed Shaikh

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[1] *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (The Hague, 1962), p. 149. Prof. S. M. Ikram and Prof. S. A. Rashid observe, "It is not true, as many have held since Maulana Abu'l Kalam Azad eloquently put forward his views in his *Tazkirah*, that but for these letters (of, Mujaddid), Muslim nobles would not have stood by Islam, or but for the efforts of Shaikh Ahmad, Akbar's heterodoxy would have superseded Islam in India. Generally speaking Muslim nobility had not been unmindful of its responsibilities, and Akbar's heterodoxy had died with him even before Shaikh Ahmad took an active hand in the matter." (*History of Muslim Civilization in India and Pakistan*, p. 267).

[2] *MRM*, pp. 217-222.

[3] *Supra*, 192-94, 282-83.

'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi,[1] whose letter to Babur anticipates the political and economic demands of the orthodox revivalists of the reigns of Akbar and his successors.

The orthodox reaction to Akbar's rule is made clear in Badauni's *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh,* but his *Najatu'r Rashid* spells out in detail the duties of orthodox Muslims. Written in 1591 to teach Muslims true orthodox principles, it challenges and refutes the new trends of Islam in India.[2] From Badauni's remarks it appears that a brief work on the subject had already been written by some other scholar[3] and that he had merely hurriedly prepared an amplified version of this. His statement that the work was undertaken at Mirza Nizamu'd Din's request, may or may not be true, but be that as it may, the work undoubtedly voices the demands of the orthodox section of the Mughal elite.

The *Najatu'r Rashid* expects Hindus to be happy with the status of *kafiran muti' i-Islam* (*kafirs* or Hindus obedient to Islam) and in this respect does not much differ from Shaikh 'Abdu'l Quddus Gangohi's views. Thus Badauni says that *kafirs* obedient to Islam share with Muslims the profits and losses of daily life. Unlike Muslims, they have not obtained the good fortune of accepting Islam; yet they are all potential converts,[4] thereby providing Muslims with the occasion of gaining grace by bringing them into the community of Islam.

According to Badauni, a Muslim is one who uses neither hand nor tongue to harm a Muslim; yet his definition of Islam is limited to the Sunnis alone. Ideologically, what disturbed orthodox Sunnis most was *ijtihadi* and *tahqiqi*[5] Islam, advocating independent thinking and reasoning, which tended to cut the ground from under the feet of orthodoxy. This included the sufism of Ibn 'Arabi which had its own reasons for attacking orthodoxy.[6] Badauni called all such Sunnis apostates, heretics, or Hinduised Muslims,[7] and considered them more dangerous than the Hindus themselves. But it was most of all the Shii'is who disturbed the equanimity[1] of the orthodox mind, and orthodox Sunnis' efforts to reassert their dominance did not cease, even after the failure of the Bihar and Bengal rebellions. This fact was a vital strand in the social and political life of the time.

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[1] *Supra,* 37-39.

[2] The author admits in his preface that he did not have any reference work at hand to work upon and wrote everything from memory.

[3] *NR,* f. 1b.

[4] *NR,* f. 63b.

[5] *Supra,* 279-280.

[6] *NR,* f. 27a.

[7] *NR,* ff. 12a, 27b.

Champions of orthodox Sunnism were found in all classes; eminent Sunni nobles, Sunni officers of every rank, poets and 'ulama. The nobles of the older generation, particularly the Turanis, took no interest in Akbar's religious inquiries. Qutbu'd Din Muhammad Khan, a *mansabdar* of 5000, openly urged Akbar to follow the traditional form of Sunni faith observed by the rulers of Transoxiana and Turkey. Shahbaz Khan Kamboh[2] did not hesitate to abuse Bir Bal in the presence of Akbar.[3] Qilich Khan,[4] a very influential Turani noble who rose to a *mansab* of 4,500 was a staunch Sunni and patron of Sunni scholars and saints. Badauni enthusiastically describes a scene which took place at the end of 1584, when a large assembly of people gathered to break the Ramazan fast in front of Qilich Khan's house, and Ghazi Khan Badakhshi delivered a sermon on the "Inna Fatahna" chapter of the Qur'an.[5]

The Sunni zeal of Mirza Faulad Barlas, whom Akbar sent as an ambassador to Turan in 1577, led to his murdering the Shi'i Mulla Ahmad, and thus to his own execution for this crime in spite of the fact that high officials, and perhaps even the ladies of the harem, had interceded on his behalf.[6] Badauni and other orthodox Sunnis regarded him a martyr and they wrote chronograms of the event such as "Bravo, the dagger of Faulad (Steel) and "Hell-fire Pig." Indeed, Badauni, who visited Mulla Ahmad on his death-bed, notes that he, and others too, thought that Mulla Ahmad looked like a pig. Abu'l Fazl placed guards by his grave, but during the absence of the Imperial Camp from Lahore, local residents took his dead body from the grave and burnt it.[7]

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[1] *NR*, f. 116b.

[2] Infra, 186-87.

[3] *MT*, II, p. 274; Lowe, p. 282.

[4] He hailed from Andajan, a province of Farghana; his ancestors were old retainers of the Timurids.

[5] *MT*, II, p. 340; Lowe, p. 351. Chapter 48 of the Qur'an regards Hudaibiyah Truce a victory and is very popular with preachers. It begins with the verse, "Surely we have granted thee a clear vitory."

[6] *AN*, III, p. 257; Bev, III, p. 804.

[7] *MT*, II, pp. 364-65; Lowe, pp. 367-77.

The Turani soldiers were generally staunch Sunnis and any departure from traditional beliefs inflamed them. We have seen how, when Badauni was bubbling with enthusiasm for written law during his first years at Court, Mirza Sulaiman snubbed him for having failed to recite *fatiha* and confining himself to du'a. The following hemistich by Sahmi of Bukhara, who was a servant of Mirza 'Aziz Koka, shows that to belong to Bukhara was regarded as a sure sign of being a Sunni.

"I am a pure Sunni for I come from Bukhara."[1]

The bitter correspondence exchanged between the Safavids and Uzbegs[2] after the latter had seized and sacked the holy city of Mashhad in 1589, was made known in India and excited considerable interest among both the Sunnis and the Shi'is. The *'ulama* of Transoxiana had declared that the Shi'is were heretics and that it was lawful for the Sunnis to annihilate them and take a forcible possession of their property. The Shi'i *'ulama* had likewise condemned Sunni beliefs. According to Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi, Mujaddid Alf i-Sani, Shi'i scholars used to take letters from their Irani 'ulama to assemblies of the nobles and discuss their contents with pride. Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi first refuted them in discussions and later on wrote a short treatise entitled *Radd i Rawafiz* to discredit the Shi'is.[3]

The growing strength of the new Mughal elite, the persecution of 'ulama and sufis who were not prepared to give up their political ambitions, and Akbar's success in subjecting the leadership of the orthodox Sunni resistence to his authority, made the 'ulama change their tactics. The new elite—'ulama, nobles and high officers loyal to Akbar—now became the target for their attack, and the orthodox Sunnis decided to win their battle against all unorthodox elements by arousing a sense of unqualified obedience to the Emperor, thereby gaining his sympathy.

Thus it is that Badauni follows the teaching of Ghazali and other orthodox Sunni supporters of kingship and points out that the *hadis* says that were there no kings, men would have devoured men,[1] and that obedience to a ruler is imperative for he is God's shadow on earth[2] and identical with the Divine Being. The Divine Command thus equates obedience to the ruler with obedience to God and His Prophet.[3] One hour of just government by a Sultan is equal to the prayers of a lifetime of human beings and *jinns* combined. According to a *hadis* of the Prophet, the birds in the air, the fish in the water and the beasts in the jungle give their blessing to just rulers. Even if a ruler is a tyrant he should not be cursed, for although some people suffer on account of his cruelty, an overwhelmingly large proportion of people reap the benefits of peace and prosperity which can occur under such a ruler. For this reason kings are likened to fire, for the benefits they bestow outweighs the harm they do. The need to seek their protection is stronger than the reasons for avoiding them. If rulers are benevolent and merciful, their subjects should thank God and bless them; and if they are ruthless, their people should blame their own misconduct for deserving such rulers. "People get the rulers they deserve."[4] If people are bad, they come to be dominated by bad rulers, who should not therefore be blamed or cursed. Referring to his own times he goes on to say that the disobedience of his contemporaries was responsible for their hardships and sufferings.[5]

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[1] *MT*, III, p. 242; Haig, p. 336, Badauni says, "Lashkar Khan, the paymaster in chief, who was a Khurasani suspected of heresy, though he did not openly profess it, said, "Then, Mulla, there is also such a thing as an impure Sunni" Mirza 'Aziz Koka said on the spur of the moment, "You, for example."

[2] Iskandar Munshi *"Alam Aray 'Abbasi*, I.

[3] Ahmad Sihrindi, *Radd i-Rawafiz* (Lucknow, n.d.), pp. 1-2.

Buttressing Sunni orthodoxy was considered the duty of the Sunni 'ulama, sufis, intellectuals and nobles themselves. The movement to reassert Sunni orthodoxy came to have two facets: its activist side involved the creation of an atmosphere of fear and hatred of the new elite; and the pacifist side strove to propagate and disseminate the orthodox Sunni teachings. On the whole all was made along traditional lines, by denouncing *bid'a* (innovations), apostasy and heresy.

Looking back on the past history of Islam, particularly under Akbar, Badauni asserts that the past disputes of the 'ulama had been responsible for all the calamities and misfortunes that had be fallen the Muslims. He goes on to say that a *mujadila* (dispute) is entirely different from a *munazira* (debate). *Munazira* should be based upon logical arguments and should be carried on gently and peacefully, and not "by the force of the vein of neck," i.e. by shouting and losing one's temper.[1] A *munazira* is not meant for the exhibition of pride, conceit and arrogance. Should one find one's opponent's reasoning correct, one's mistake must be acknowledged and the correctness of the opposing view admitted. No quarrel should arise from wrong issues.[2] It is imperative for the 'alims that they should be courteous and develop a pleasant personality. He illustrates his point by an anecdote about Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi. When the Shaikh was forced to go on pilgrimage in 1580, an Arab mulla met him at the port of embarkation. In accordance with the rules of his profession the mulla began to instruct the Shaikh in the rites and ceremonies of pilgrimage. The Shaikh was annoyed and said that he was an 'alim, whereupon the Arab rebuffed him by remarking that he did not see in the Shaikh that smiling face which was the principal characteristic of an 'alim.[3]

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[1] *NR*, f. 61a.

[2] *Ibid*, f. 62a.

[3] Compare *Counsel For Kings*, pp. 45-47, 61-63, 71-72.

[4] Ghazali says, "We get the *amirs* whom we deserve." *Counsel For Kings*, p. 62.

[5] *NR*, ff. 61a-62a

Criticising the misguided 'ulama, Badauni quotes the well-known anecdote of the sufi and devil[4] in order to emphasise that only the righteous 'ulama could lead Muslims properly. This anecdote relates how a saint, finding the devil idle, asked why he was not paying attention to his job of misguiding people. The devil replied that a large number of the wicked 'ulama had emerged and taken over his job, leaving nothing for him to do.[5]

Although much of Badauni's criticism of the 'ulama, including the devil anecdote, is traditional and repetitive both in language and in spirit, he gives it new meaning by bringing to bear upon it his own vast experience at Akbar's court. About two decades later Mujaddid, in his letters to Farid Bukhari and to Sadr i-Jahan, urged that control of *Shari'a* at Jahangir's court should be assigned to one outstanding 'alim alone, preferably to one of the *'ulama i-akhirat* (alims concerned only with the promotion of spiritual interests). He thought this to be the only way out of the impasse created by the intrigues of the selfish and worldly 'ulama.[1] Professor Mujib suggests that "the inference would not be unjustified that he was thinking of himself."[2] Whether Mujaddid had it in mind that he himself or someone else should hold the position of an all-powerful 'alim at Court, he did not realize that the suggestion was impractical in itself. No one, not even he with his enthusiasm for Sunni Shari'a[3] could overcome the intrigues of "selfish" 'ulama and sufis, let alone other sections of the new Mughal elite whose interests lay in the furtherance of the ideology evolved by Akbar. Badauni's advice to the 'ulama to reform themselves and to develop pleasanter personalities, although exceedingly difficult, was not impossible.[4]

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[1] Obviously Badauni had the 'Ibadat Khana debates in mind. *Supra.*

[2] *NR*, f. 116a.

[3] *Ibid*, f. 1366.

[4] See Shaikh Sharafu'd Din Yahya Munari's remarks in *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India*, p. 51. Mujaddid used to make similar observations.

[5] *NR*, f. 78b.

Likewise Badauni denounces the Shi'is in the traditional abusive language, but the way he arouses Sunni fears concerning them is very clever and would be enough to upset any Sunni in any age. He condemns them for introducing innovations such as celebration of 'Id-Ghadir,[5] for adding sentences praising 'Ali to the *kalima*[6] and *azan*[7] and for reviling the companions of Prophet Muhammad particularly the first three Caliphs and 'A'isha.[8] He urges Sunnis to avoid the company of Shi'is and not to show them any respect at all. There is nothing new in this; such a demand is as old as the Shi'i-Sunni conflicts. Mujaddid made similar demands in Jahangir's reign.[1] However, in order to arouse fear of the Shi'is among Sunnis, Badauni alleges that the enmity towards Sunnism displayed by Ibn 'Alqami, the last 'Abbasid vizier,[2] was responsible for the overthrow of the 'Abbasid empire and the orgy of plunder and devastation in Baghdad by Hulagu. On the basis of his personal knowledge he accuses the Shi'is at Akbar's court of following in Ibn 'Alqami's footsteps, and warns Sunnis that the number of Shi'is is still small; yet if the situation is not dealt with immediately, the future for both the Sunnis and the Mughal government is dark.[3] He seems to suggest that the mischief should be nipped in the bud at once, while there was no difficulty in expelling them from positions of trust and responsibility, or in creating situations which forced them to leave the country.[4] All this is very similar to the advice the orthodox 'ulama gave to Iltutmish about handling the Hindus.

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[1] *MRM*, pp. 225-26, 230-31, 251.

[2] *The Indian Muslims*, p. 244.

[3] *MRM*, pp. 246-254.

[4] *NR*, f. 136b.

[5] On his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage, Muhammad stopped at Ghadir Khumm, between Mecca and Medina about 3 miles from al-Juhfa on 18 Zu'l-Hijja 10/16 March 632, and delivered a sermon in which, taking 'Ali by the hand, he asked his faithful followers whether he, (Muhammad), was not closer (*awla*) to the Believers than they were to themselves; the crowd cried out, "It is so, O Apostle of God." He then declared, "He of whom I am the *mawla* (the patron), of him 'Ali is also the *mawla*." (*EI*, new I, pp. 992-94). The Shi'is regard this event as being Muhammad's conclusive nomination of 'Ali to succeed him and celebrate it like an 'Id festival.

[6] The Muslim confession of faith

[7] The signal for the summons to prayer given by the Mu'azzin or crier from the minarets or towers of the mosques.

[8] *NR*, II, f. 36b-40a.

But Badauni does not advocate similar treatment for *kafirs* (Hindus). He strongly condemns close association; he recommends that Muslims should, like the second Caliph 'Umar (634-644), be very severe with them and not entrust them with any secrets. *Kafirs* were enemies and not well-wishers of Islam and that their main interest was creating trouble for the Muslims. He illustrates this with an anecdote about Abu Musa Ash'ari,[5] whom Caliph 'Umar had appointed the governor of Yemen. Abu Musa wrote to 'Umer telling him that a *kafir* was paying him a huge amount of money in the hope that he might occasionally have a part in administrative affairs; and recommending that his request be granted and the money thus obtained be used for the good of the Muslims. 'Umar replied that he should vow to entertain no more such impious ideas, otherwise he would be dismissed. This story shows that even to think of associating the *kafirs* with administration was a sin,[1] let alone Akbar's policy of making them equal partners in all departments of the government.

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[1] *MRM*, pp. 250-51.

[2] Some authorities believe that he was responsible for inviting Hulagu to Baghdad, and that after Baghdad's seizure, Ibn 'Alqami was put in command of it.

[3] *NR*, f. 116a.

[4] *Ibid*, f. 116b.

[5] 'Umar appointed him governor of Basra in 638. Four years later he was appointed governor of Kufah but then transferred back to Basra again. He organised many raids against the rebellious tribes but was more successful in Kufah. In 657 he was appointed as one of the two arbitrators to settle the dispute between 'Ali and Mu'awiya.

Badauni calls upon the Muslims in general, and merchants in particular, not to sell arms to the *kafirs* for this amounts to helping them and adds to their strength while making the Muslims weaker and thus is unlawful and a sin.[2]

In order to compel the Muslims to abandon all the Hindu practices and customs which they had adopted, Badauni reminds them of an injuction in *hadis* against copying *kafir* which is regarded as a heinous sin. This, according to Badauni, includes the celebration of Hindu festivals, wearing Hindu dress and participation in Hindu games and sports. Yellow robes being worn by *kafirs*, Muslims should not wear them; such clothes should be bleached or, even better, burnt.[3] He then goes on to criticize Sadr i-Jahan who himself used to wear silken garments in red and yellow. When Badauni objected to this, Sadr i-Jahan replied that in countries where such garments were prevalent there was no sin attached to wearing them. To Badauni's questions as to whether he had any authority on the matter Sadr i-Jahan answered in the affirmative.[4]

Badauni reminds Muslims that God does not allow them to marry *mushrik*[5] (those who give companions or partners to God, here Hindu) girls without converting them to Islam; and that, similarly, no Muslim girl should be married to an infidel unless the bridegroom is converted to Islam.[6]

Refuting the new elite who argued that Hindus were not *mushrik* but were monotheists, Badauni says that idol worship is *shirk* (giving companions to or partners to God) whether or not the idols are accepted as the Creator. The allegoric sufi interpretations of idols and *zunnar* don't change the injuctions of the *shari'a* which are insuperable. Muslims should not step beyond the bounds of propriety as demanded by the *shari'a*.

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[1] *NR*, f. 32a.
[2] *NR*, f. 102b.
[3] *NR*, ff. 97b-98a.
[4] *NR*, f. 98a.
[5] "And marry not the idolatresses until they believe; and certainly a believing maid is better than an idolatress even though she please you." Chapter II, 221.
[6] *NR*, f. 32a.

Use of the brahmanical thread is the sign of infidelity. The reference to it in sufic verses is intended to indicate a stage in the sufic journey and it has no connection with the practices of the worldly life.[1] Also unlawful is painting the *qashqa* (sectarial mark) on the forehead.[2]

In refutation of the Quranic authority which Akbar and Abu'l Fazl *produced* in defence of the Emperor's reverence for the sun, Badauni based his condemnation of the practice on the following verse:

> "And of His signs are the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Adore not the sun nor the moon, but adore Allah who created them if He it is that you serve."[3]

He gives a different reason for outlawing a belief in the prophecies of soothsayers and astrologers. He says that belief in astrology leads to the rejection of belief in the Prophet Muhammad's *mi'raj* (ascent to heaven), for the philosophers believe that no miracle can be performed with the heavenly bodies.[4]

Badauni advocates that everything described in the *Qur'an* should be accepted as literally true; even the existence of the *jinns* should not be doubted. He goes on to quote several anecdotes relating how *jinns* performed miracles and influenced the life of men in various ways.[5]

The orthodox found sufi values exceedingly disturbing; and their ascetic exercises and mortification of the flesh puzzling. For example the attitudes of many sufis towards dogs, which Islam declared to be unclean, upset them. The sufis argued that dogs have ten qualities so good as to make a man who possessed even one of them a saint. The most outstanding of these was the gratefulness they felt towards their benefactors, and so on account of this men should be kind to them. Badauni says that whenever Mir Abu'l Ghais Bukhari of Delhi found an invalid or lame dog, he would depute someone to look after it and feed it. Explaining his attitude to dogs, the Mir said that human beings in their relation to God were like dogs, and that by looking after dogs they could make Him take care of them in their turn. Badauni, who regarded the Mir as high-minded and a man of pure religion, with saintly qualities and steadfast in the traditional beliefs, found his attitude irrefutable.[1] The precedent set by such an eminent sufi as Abu'l Ghais cut the ground from under his feet and he found himself unable to urge Muslims to hate this animal, legally unclean. However, he did not fail to find a loop-hole for denouncing the practice of rearing dogs. He emphasised that kindness to dogs did not mean that men should eat from the same plate as dogs as many misguided persons did. This is an attack on Qasim Kahi[2] and Faizi[3] whom Badauni accuses of freely associating with dogs. He tells a number of anecdotes regarding Faizi's love of dogs[4] in order to arouse pious hatred against him.

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[1] *NR*, f. 15a.

[2] *NR*, f. 15b.

[3] Chapter 41, 37.

[4] *NR*, f. 15a-b.

[5] Several verses of the Qur'an mention *jinns*, for example "And the *jinn*, we created it before an itensely hot fire" (ch. 15, 27) "And He created the *jinn* of a flame of fire" (ch. 55, 15). The modern exegesis of the Qur'an interppret the word to mean, men of fiery temperament or rebellious nature, or men who lead others to evil. The sixteenth century Muslims of the School of Mushtaqi and Badauni believed them to be spirits, both good and evil, with an ability to exercise control over human or worldly affairs. *NR*, ff. 152a-153a.

On the whole Badauni vigorously takes issue with believers in *Wahdat ul-Wujud*. He does not find much fault with the view itself, but says that this subject is very subtle and can be discussed both from the viewpoint of philosophers and of sufis. It should not be debated publicly and its principles should in no circumstance be applied to every day life otherwise they would lead to the violation of the rule of *shari'a*.[5] Thus those who believe that God is everywhere, and that there is no justification in calling the Ka'bah or mosque the house of God, are misguided fools and perverse. Therefore it is worthless to have discussions with them and their company should be avoided.[1]

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[1] *MT*, III, p. 126; Haig, p. 183; *NR*, f. 100a.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 173; *Ibid*, p. 243.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 300; *Ibid*, p. 414.

[4] In his biography of 'Urfi of Shiraz, Badauni says, "that one day, when 'Urfi went to Shaikh Faizi's house, he found him fondling a puppy. 'Urfi asked, "What is the name of this child of my lord's." The Shaikh replied, 'His name is wall-known ('Urfi)!' and 'Urfi at once replied, "May it be auspicious" (Mubarak bashad, Mubarak being Faizi's father). *MT*, III, p. 285; Haig, p. 393.

[5] *NR*, ff. 31a, 93b.

To ridicule the *shari'a* is *kufr*; it amounts to scoffing at the founder of *shari'a* (Prophet Muhammad). Blasphemous language should not be uttered even in joke.[2] Belief in the transmigration of the soul is unlawful, and sufi views suggesting the contrary are not tenable; Muslims should believe in bodily resurrection.[3]

Badauni admits that it is true that some eminent sufis believe that the Divine mercy is infinite and even Pharaoh, who according to Islamic traditions claimed Godhead for himself, was not to be deprived of it; but this, he says, is no plea for violating the laws of *shari'a*. Thus only those who recited the *kalimah* with faith in orthodox Sunnism could expect the Prophet Muhammad's intercession on the Day of Judgment.[4]

Badauni's onslaught against all sinful and evil innovations is a direct or indirect attack on the contemporary elite. He describes them as the *mulhidan i-in zaman* (the heretics of this age), who like similar heretics in earlier centuries reject the belief that the *Qur'an* is a miracle. He then goes on to assert that as prophetic wisdom is superior to the intellectual capacity of mankind as a whole, no one is entitled to question the wisdom of the prophets.[5]

Knowing that both Shaikh Mubarak and Faizi had made their mark on India as in other parts of the Islamic world by writing Quranic exegeses, Badauni says that the modern heretics, like those of old, have no faith in the Qur'an and interpret it esoterically from an Isma'ili point of view. Their exegeses are wrong and are incompatible with the laws of Arabic grammar and the *shari'a*. The blame which they lay on the 'ulama is unjust.[6]

True education according to Badauni is therefore the education provided by the *shari'a*. Fire worshippers, the Chinese, and Hindus claim that their religions also possess sacred books, but in Badauni's opinion, since they don't believe in *wahi* (divine revelation) their religious works embody not the word of God but the teachings of the devil. The study of the religious works of old religions is prohibited for two reasons; firstly as most of the ordinances of old religions have been abrogated, studying them is likely to create confusion in the minds of Muslims, who might think that these books also teach the divine commands and thus involve themselves in grave doubts. They might be tempted to act upon such former ordinances, thinking that there was no justification for their being revoked. This reasoning is fallacious for every order is obeyed only as long as it is not revoked and a new order is issued for the benefit of mankind. For example, consumption of liquor was permissible for the followers of other prophets, but it was made unlawful for the Muslims for God had made them more spiritual and wiser than others. Before the coming of Islam men were of ordinary mould, it did not much matter whether they drank liquor or not.[1]

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[1] *NR*, ff. 27b, 57a, b.
[2] *Ibid*, f. 93b.
[3] *Ibid*, ff. 22a-23a.
[4] *Ibid*, f. 40b.
[5] *Ibid*, ff. 6a-6b.
[6] *Ibid*, f. 41a.

The second reason prohibiting the study of the sacred books of other religions is that, unlike the Qur'an, they are not endowed with such i'jaz (eloquence of discourse) as to make interpolation impossible.[2]

Baduni's criticisms are not confined to education, he goes on to advocate the ruthless desecration and demolition of the places of the worship of other religions. The fire-worshippers and the Hindus according to him, don't follow the true religion; their places of worship are not holy and therefore are not real places of worship. The image worship of Christians has transformed their churches into idol temples. According to law no old or new temple was to be preserved and the *kafirs* were not allowed to erect idol temples. Opinions differ as regards the demolition of temples erected before the coming of Islam. In the Hanafi religion it is lawful to leave them untouched, but only town temples;[3] a different interpretation could be applied to village temples which would mean that there was no harm in their destruction.

Badauni strongly condemns a number of social practices with which Indian Muslims continued regardless of orthodox disapproval. These were all in connection with what the sufis called 'reverence for the soul of the deceased saints" and by the orthodox "grave worship." Orthodox Sultan Firuz endeavoured by legislation to stop the practice of visiting the graves,[1] as did, the 'ulama through their strongly worded sermons, but this popular custom survived the efforts of both rulers and 'ulama and to get rid of it Badauni and the other orthodox of Akbar's reign, like their predecessors condemned the practice as a violation of Islamic law and opposed to Muhammad's *hadis*. Badauni says that Muhammad had cursed all women who went to visit the graves and all men who transformed the graves into mosques and lighted lamps there. When Islam first began, men were also prohibited from visiting the tombs but later on this ordinance was abrogated.[2]

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[1] *NR*, f. 35b.
[2] *Ibid*, ff. 35b-36a.
[3] *Ibid*, f. 33a.

The obedience to the ruler advocated by the orthodox did not necessarily involve surrender to the imperial orders and practices. They justified their criticism of all innovations by saying that they were only acting in accordance with the requirements of their pious duty to command to do what is lawful (*amr i-ma 'ruf*) and to prevent the unlawful (*nihy munkar*). In the first instance this was obligatory for *qazis, muhtasibs* and governors, and then it was incumbent upon alims and lastly upon *faqirs* or darveshes. No unlawful order could be given by rulers or by *qazis, muftis* or 'alims or anyone else. Bad laws were in no circumstances to be passed whether they affected the worldly or the religious life for they brought troubles upon people, and were a source of confusion and general ruin.[3] He then goes on to say that *khutbah* is one of the Islamic rites and a substitute for the two *raka's*[4] of obligatory prayers. The true religion makes respect for the *khutbah* imperative; and it was combined with the recitation of *fatiha*.[5] Many contemporary sufis followed this practice but a large number who did not feel themselves bound by laws and dedicated themselves to meditation and hard ascetic exercises, ignored the khutbah. This was undesirable and laws which every Muslim followed unanimously were not to be ignored.[6]

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[1] *Futuhat i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 10-11.

[2] *NR*, f. 144a.

[3] *Ibid*, f. 68a, 104a.

[4] *Rak'a* is the act of bending the head, so that the palms of the hands rest upon the knees. The statement that this or that *salat* (prayer) consists of so many *rak'a* means that the head was bent the same number of times.

[5] the first *sura* or chapter of the Qur'an.

[6] *NR*, ff. 114a-b.

Similarly circumcision is a recognised Islamic custom. It is incumbent upon the Imam (ruler) to fight against all those who abandon it. Its importance may be gauged from the fact that if one is not circumcised in childhood; one should have oneself circumcised when grown up. Some Indian Ra'is who do not follow any of the Islamic customs don't avoid circumcision.[1]

Some insolent *muftis* have taken liberties with the true laws of *fiqh* relating to the shaving of beards in order to please the rulers. It is said that when the sons of the Mirzas of Herat began to shave their beards Sultan Husain strictly prohibited the practice; the *farmans* relating to this prohibition are preserved in the Imperial Record Office.[2]

Rearing pigeons in order to make them compete is also unlawful. In the books of the *fiqh*, the practice is strictly prohibited. Competitive games involving pigeons are a source of great disturbance and lead to life-long enmity between different parties and families.[3]

The posts of the *qazi* and the *khatib* should not be made hereditary. Criticising the contemporary practice of making the posts hereditary,[4] Badauni says that sons of the *qazis* and the *khatibs* who are not competent to hold the post are appointed to succeed their father out of humanitarian considerations. Such worthless successors often act as the *imams* (leader of prayers) of the sufis and the 'alims.[5]

If an *ummi*, in Badauni's definition, one who cannot recite the Qur'an according to the prescribed rules, leads the prayers as an *imam*, he spoils his own prayers and those of his followers. 'Alims should not make such persons their *imams* and should not follow them in prayers.[6]

Badauni and the orthodox, like ancient Persians, believed that the religious systems preached by different religions generally last for one thousand years. It was thought that Christianity had lost its original teachings through the interpolations in the Bible, and that the same was true for other religions. Those periods nearer to that of Prophet Muhammad were considered to be endowed

[1] *NR*, f. 94a.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *NR*, f. 130a.
[4] *Ibid*, f. 133a.
[5] *Ibid*, f. 132b.
[6] *Ibid.*

with a peculiar splendour and tranquility. As one thousand years had now passed, a decline in Islam was inevitable. Because of the difference and quarrels of the 'ulama, and the negligence of high officers towards their duty to preserve the piety and purity of Islam, things had come to a pretty pass. The true Islam was disintegrating everywhere, in all countries and in all regions, proving the truth of the Prophet Muhammad's saying that Islam was rare when it started and that at the end it would revert to the same position. Those who followed the true Islam belonged to a category of the same rare people and deserved felicitation.[1]

Although Badauni's analysis is based on conditions in Akbar's court, it was equally true for the Shi'i courts in the Deccan and in Iran. It was not only conditions prevailing in pre-Jahangir India, but the fact of the beginning of the second millenium of the Islamic era, that had induced Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi to declare himself as the *mujaddid* (orthodox Sunni reformer) of the second millenium.

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[1] *NR*, f. 104a.

CHAPTER 13

ABU'L FAZL AS AN ADMINISTRATOR AND A SOLDIER

Abu'l Fazl's ability to handle any crisis successfully had made him indispensible to Akbar, and the most outstanding statesman of his times. Father Monserrate, who knew him intimately, calls him the "prime minister of Akbar."[1] Badauni, better acquainted with official nomenclature, says that from a *mansabdar* of twenty, he attained the *mansab* of 2,000 and the status of a vizier.[2] Smith says: "It was not necessary to appoint him to any of the highest offices. He occupied an informal position as Secretary of State and Private Secretary, which secured him in particular greater power than if he had been Vakil or Vizier."[3] Emphasising Abu'l Fazl's achievement as a statesman Professor Beni Prasad remarks: "His hand is clearly discernible in the numerous decrees which issued from the Imperial offices. If the secret consultations of the Council Chamber could be revealed to us, his fame as a statesman would probably stand higher even than his well-deserved literary reputation."[4]

The *Akbar Nama*, however, incidentally mentions only a few minor tasks undertaken after entering the Court circle. In the account of September 1578, he is seen gathering milch-cows at Sambhar for royal children.[5] In 1582 important nobles were put in charge of the trade in various goods, in order to facilitate business and commerce; Abu'l Fazl was given the charge of woollen goods.[6] In 1583 the princes were given nominal control of different departments and new functionaries were appointed as de facto officers. Abu'l Fazl was ordered to serve under

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[1] *Monserrate's Commentary*, pp. 53-54.

[2] *MT*, II, p. 206; Lowe, p. 209.

[3] *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 308.

[4] Beni Prasad, *History of Jahangir* (Allahabad, 1940, 3rd edition), p. 31.

[5] *AN*, III, p. 256; Bev, III, p. 362.

[6] *Ibid*, III, p. 396; *Ibid*, p. 585.

Prince Sultan Daniyal in the department of religious and educational affairs. His associates were Ghazi Khan Badakhshi and Rai Sarjan. Rai Sarjan must have supervised the religious matters of the Hindus, while Abu'l Fazl co-operated with the *Sadru's Sudur*; as well, he had to do justice to complainants, with Raja Bir Bal, Qasim 'Ali Khan, Hakim Humam and Shamsher Khan Kotwal as his associates. An order was issued that they should not be satisfied with the traditional system of justice based on witnesses and oaths, but in each case make painstaking investigations. It was presumed that petitioners were at a disadvantage against tyrannous men and without thorough enquiry of all aspects of the complaints, the ends of justice were not met.[1] This machinery was devised to serve as a supreme court of appeal, and relieve the Emperor of some of his judicial duties. Abu'l Fazal seems to have held these offices until his posting to the Deccan.

In 1585 he was promoted to the *mansab* of 1000.[2] A year later, when the scheme of appointing two officers to every province was started so that if one came to Court, or fell ill, the other might look after his duties, he and Shah Quli Khan Mahram were appointed governors of Delhi;[3] but the charge seems to have been nominal for Abu'l Fazl because he always remained with the Imperial Camp where besides the duties mentioned above and the work of secretary he performed several minor duties such as Mir Bakawal (superintendent of the imperial kitchen) during Akbar's march to Kashmir in 1589.[4]

At the end of 1591 he was ordered to look after the education, just beginning, of Sultan Khusrau, the son of Prince Salim; Abu'l Khaír was made responsible for the actual teaching.[5] In 1592 he was promoted to the *mansab* of 2000;[6] five years leter he was a *mansabdar* of 2500.[7]

His deep understanding of the mind of the elite coupled with his devotion to the furtherance of Imperial interest had made him a valuable member of the councils of war. In the two instances

[1] *AN*, III, p. 404-5; Bev, III, pp. 598-99.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 457; *Ibid*, p. 687.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 511; *Ibid*, p. 779.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 541; *Ibid*, p. 822.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 604; *Ibid*, p. 922.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 610; *Ibid*, p. 932.
[7] *A'in*, p. 161.

he mentions of his participation in such councils, he carried his plans through most successfully.

In the middle of July 1581 when the Imperial army was encamped at the Kabul river and Mirza Hakim submitted, all the important dignitaries ordered to hold a special meeting, urged that the Mirza should be pardoned, and the army should return. Against them Abu'l Fazl submitted:

> "When a large army under the command of such a fortunate and majestic chief has made a long journey, and when the goal is not more than seven or eight marches off, and when the frequent pardoning of offences and the return of the august standards are linked with one of those four conditions,[1] how can retreat be proper in their absence solely because of the utterances of obscure envoys and writings without the lustre of truth."

He considered that an additional reason against the return was the fact that it was the rainy season, which would cause even more hardship to the troops; but the high dignitaries tenaciously stuck to their views, and even prevailed upon Abu'l Fazl to keep quiet. Without his knowledge, some of them told the Emperor that everyone, including Abu'l Fazl, thought that the Mirza should be forgiven and the army should return. The Emperor was disgusted at their selfish short-sightedness, and especially at the apparent duplicity of Abu'l Fazl. However, the facts were soon known, and the Emperor marched on against Mirza Hakim.[2]

When Ya'qub, the eldest son of Yusuf Shah of Kashmir who after surrendering in February[3] 1585 again asserted his independence, many high dignitaries thought an invasion of Kashmir would be futile. Abu'l Fazl relying upon his own sources of information, such as Shaikh Ya'qub Sarfi, urged that strong resistance was not to be expected. It seems that Akbar, hesitating, asked the astrologers for their opinion. Agreeing with Abu'l Fazl, they represented that energy and resolution would make the imperialists victorious.[4] They proved right and Kashmir was annexed to the Mughal empire in 1586.[1]

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[1] Obviously the four degrees of devotion sacrifice of property, life, honour and religion. This should dispose of the idea that these degrees had any thing to do with any new religion.

[2] *NA*, III, pp. 356-59; Bev, III, pp. 522-28.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 488-89; *Ibid*, pp. 738-40.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 496; *Ibid*, p. 752.

The real eminence of Abu'l Fazl, however, lay in the realm of diplomacy and the arts of peace. His correspondence, both official and private, bears this out. The keynote of his success was Akbar's confidence, and the co-operation of a galaxy of Irani nobles such as Hakim Fathu'llah Shirazi and the Gilani brothers who like him stood high in Akbar's regard. One by one, they died; the entire burden fell upon Abu'l Fazl, for the Emperor took no new counsellor. To counteract the intrigues of the different elite groups and canalise their talents in the Imperial interest was not very difficult for Abu'l Fazl. His relations with other groups of the elite such as the Iranis and the Rajputs were cordial; the Indian Muslims, including the turbulent Saiyids of Barha had no serious grievances against him.

The only hostile groups were his own intriguing kinsmen, the Shaikhzadas, who had direct access to the Emperor and the Turanis. Shaikhzada officers such as Sadr i-Jahan were proud of their Four Degrees of Discipleship, yet disliked Abu'l Fazl's promotions. Farid Bukhari might well have thought that without any active military service, Abu'l Fazl was being unduly favoured. The Turanis were always hostile to him, even after the Khan i-A'zam's return from Mecca as a changed man, Khan i-A'zam's differences with Abu'l Fazl might have been patched up, but not resolved; as we shall see from the chronogram composed by him on Abu'l Fazl's death.

Grave as these factors might have been, Prince Salim's open hostility to Abu'l Fazl was far more serious.

Abu'l Fazl's faith in the Four Degrees of Devotion was geared to loyalty to Akbar and not to the interest of the Princes as they, and all the members of Akbar's family, well knew. He disregarded even influential ladies such as Akbar's mother Hamida Banu or his wife Salima Sultan Begum. Abu'l Fazl's growing influence over Akbar's policy and administration was bound to create tension between him and those ladies but both had enough foresight and tact to forestall any awkward situations.

With Prince Salim, the case was different. A child of many prayers and much loved by his father, he felt that Abu'l Fazl's influence impaired his own position and prestige at Court. Born on 31 August 1569, as he grew and obtained experience, he found disgruntled individuals and hopeful adventurers gathering round him. From childhood he knew that he was his father's successor, and so did all the nobles. The Prince was not niggard in promises, and they were not unjustified in relying upon him for the realization of their ambitions and dreams. The Prince knew that he could not rely upon Abu'l Fazl for support, in any act of defiance of the Emperor's authority. Not even his Sikri foster-brethren, so closely related to Abu'l Fazl by marriage, would have done any thing to discourage him from regarding Abu'l Fazl as an enemy.

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 496; Bev, III, pp. 752-53.

Akbar's first recorded act of censure of Prince Salim's conduct relates to an incident in May 1589, but it seems that the Emperor believed that he had long been negligent of his duty. On this occasion, the Prince failed to escort the ladies from Naushahra to the Imperial camp on the plea that Kashmir roads were too difficult and dangerous for their march. Akbar also censured the Khan i-Khanan who had been ordered to help the Prince:

> If the Prince, owing to evil propensities, behaved in thy way, why did you allow him to exhibit such audacity?"[1]

On 9 July 1589, Akbar, a chronic sufferer from stomach-ache and colic pains, was stricken so severely that he remained unconscious for hours. In his delirium, says Badauni, he accused the Prince for having him poisoned:

> "Baba Shaikhu Jiu, this sultanate will devolve on you; why have you made this attempt on me?
> To take away my heart (life), there was no need of injustice;
> I would have given it to you, had you but asked me."[2]

In May 1597, on Akbar's third visit to Kashmir, the Prince again committed some unspecified act of defiance, and was excluded from Court. On 11 May, at Rajauri, he entered Akbar's presence without permission. The Emperor was greatly angered, and appointed Abu'l Fazl to enquire and report. The historian does note give us any details, but Salim's misbehaviour must have been very serious.[1] In the sequel, he was completely estranged from Abu'l Fazl.

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[1] *AN*, III, pp.541-42; Bev, III, pp. 823-24.

[2] Abu'l Fazl does not mention Akbar's speech. *AN*, III, p. 552; Bev, III, p. 838. Badauni places the event in 999/1590-1. In any case, these two events are one and the same (*MT*, II, pp. 377-78; Lowe, p. 390.)

Although Akbar took strong action against the Prince, and even showed his anger publicly, he did not want the Prince entirely alienated. He tried to assuage his wounded pride, and it seems that to please the Prince, he temporarily disgraced Abu'l Fazl in May 1598. There are several versions of this incident. Abu'l Fazl's is that the Emperor kept him so busy that he was "unable to perform fully the outward service of attending upon the Prince Royal, and laboured explanations were not successful." The Prince and his supporters so poisoned Akbar's mind that Abu'l Fazl decided to resign, and retire to seclusion. Akbar pressed him to continue but he replied that his old enemies completely dominated the Emperor's mind. Without a thorough enquiry into his conduct, to re-establish his integrity and put his enemies to shame, there was no use in continuing in service. He even suggested an ordeal by fire to establish the truth; if we are to believe him, his enemies declined it. At all event Akbar's enquiries seem to have convinced him of Abu'l Fazl's sincerity and good relations were restored.[2]

Abu'l Fazl neither names his enemies nor describes their accusations. What can be gleaned from his account is that after failing to influence Akbar against Abu'l Fazl they made the Prince their tool. There can be little doubt that he was looking for an opportunity to humiliate the Shaikh.

Throughout the *Akbar Nama*, and even in the long account in the *A'in i-Akbari* of his early troubles and his family's flight from Agra, he names neither friends nor enemies. The enemies of his earlier life were mostly dead by 1598, and it is extremely difficult to guess whom he might have described as "old enemies" (*kuhan dushmanan*). He claims that there were a number of them, who held meetings to discuss their plans, and acted as witnesses to accusations brought against him. In his *Tuzuk*, Jahangir gives a long list of favourites who had rallied round him in Akbar's last years in the hope of rapid Promotion on his becoming Emperor. Not all these would have entered into intrigues against Abu'l Fazl; such Iranis in the list as Sharif Khan son of the artist 'Abdu's Samad, whom Jahangir regarded as a "brother, a son, a friend and a companion"[1] would probably have remained aloof, as his pro-Irani leanings were well known. Most likely the "old enemies" came from among the Shaikhzadas, such as Miran Sadr i-Jahan and his associates. Sadr i-Jahan and Abu'l Fazl were rivals in the sanctioning of grants, and Sadr i-Jahan enjoyed the confidence of both the Emperor and his son.

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[1] When Khwaja Phul was rude in informing the Prince of the Emperor's anger, the Prince complained to the Emperor who consoled him by having the tip of Khwaja's tongue cut. *AN*, III, p. 727; Bev, III, p. 1088.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 741; Bev, III, pp. 1106-08.

The nature of the accusations against Abu'l Fazl is difficult to determine precisely. Three authorities mention the matter. The earliest is Mu'tamad Khan, who says that Akbar was angry with Abu'l Fazl for having numerous copies of his father's commentary on the Qur'an made and sent to foreign rulers; that Abu'l Fazl was also guilty of many acts of presumption against the Prince; and that Akbar forbade him to attend the Court for some days. Finally, compassion on one whom he had himself cherished, moved the Emperor to restore him to his old position.[2]

Shaikh Farid Bhakkari says, in the *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin*, that Prince Salim's feelings about Abu'l Fazl were indifferent, until a day when he visited his house and found forty copyists reproducing Shaikh Mubarak's commentary. He herded the copyists and their work into the Emperor's presence, and denounced Abu'l Fazl for inducing them to follow Hinduism, while himself secretly practising orthodox Islam.[3] Shah Nawaz Khan's *Ma'asiru'l Umara*, reproduces this story, putting the following sentence on Salim's lips:

> "He induces us to follow one thing, and privately practices something else."[4]

This has been interpreted to mean that the Prince resented Abu'l Fazl's pressure on the courtiers to follow the so called Divine Faith while he himself privately practised Islam. This view is based on the assumption that the Divine Faith was a separate religion invented by Akbar. Beveridge, says "If what Badauni says be true, that the preface to the commentary contained a claim by Mubarak to be the reformer of the Age, Akbar would naturally be displeased at the circulation of this work." Beveridge also quotes Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad's view that "Akbar had been displeased with Mubarak for writing the commentary without reference to him, or perhaps for not dedicating it to him, and he was again displeased when Abu'l Fazl sent out copies without permission."[1]

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[1] *R & B*, p. 14.

[2] Mu'tamad Khan, *Iqbal Nama i-Jahangiri* (Lucknow, 1870), II, p. 403.

[3] *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin*, p. 72.

[4] *Ma'asiru'l Umara*, II, p. 610.

Many matters militate against all these views. Faizi wrote a Quranic commentary on his own, praised Akbar in the perface and sent copies to scholars in India and outside it. His letters are evidence of this. Had he found Akbar hostile to the writing of the commentary, Faizi would not have undertaken it so openly. If Akbar was not offended with Faizi for writing the commentary it was unlikely that he would have objected to Shaikh Mubarak's commentary; for he was not a government servant, and led a retired life; Akbar's estrangement from Abu'l Fazl was in May 1598 while Shaikh Mubarak died, aged 88, in August 1593. Abu'l Fazl's reproduction of his commentary did not need a Prince Salim to discover it. In Akbar's sayings, there are several references to verses of the Qur'an. Akbar once declared, that had commentaries been written in the time of Muhammad, differences of interpretation would have not arisen. The policy of Akbar to present to the Islamic world his image as a good Muslim was intended to disarm the propaganda of his Indian critics. The propagation of works of Quranic exegesis by his own favourites and other scholars associated with his courtiers served this purpose well.

The case which thus made out falls; but the mystery of Akbar's alienation from his friend remains unresolved. Broadly we may surmise that the repeated complaints of Prince Salim upset the Emperor. It is not unlikely that the Shaikhzadas, with Prince Salim's support, might have tried to convince Akbar that Abu'l Fazl's Islam was not genuinely based on *ijtihad* and *tahqiq,* and that their own information proved that it was *taqlidi;*[2]

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[1] Bev, III, p. 1107 n. 1.

[2] Not rational but traditional.

and that Abu'l Fazl was a hypocrite. If proved, this would have meant Abu'l Fazl's permanent expulsion from Court. It seems that Akbar made a temporary display of anger towards Abu'l Fazl as a gesture towards the Prince.

The real complaint of the nobles and other dignitaries was that Abu'l Fazl received promotions and high *mansabs* without performing any military duties or diplomatic assignment. This was true, and even embarassed Abu'l Fazl himself. In January 1586 Akbar had agreed to send him to fight against the Yusuf za'is, but later had lots drawn. The name of Bir Bal appearing, he despatched him; the campaign ending in disaster for the Mughal army, and the death of Bir Bal. Introducing his account of this event Abu'l Fazl says of himself:

> "Inasmuch as the head of this confused and ambitious one was filled with thoughts of battle, he represented to His Majesty that although his serving in his presence was the elixir of fortune, yet he wished to perform some service away from the Presence, (*parastari-i gha'ibana*) which is the true testing place of a man's consistency and loyalty. Raised by His Majesty from the lane of contempt to a conspicuous post in the world, he wished to lighten the shoulder of his shame of the burden of ill-informed criticism, and offer a renewed proof of the perspicacity of the Khedive of the world. He was strengthened in this desire by thinking that he might be able to do good service, and also shut those gates of impropriety, the mouths of the envious. Should he lose his brief life, he would acquire an eternal good name."[1]

The criticisms of the rival *mansabdars* upset him, and he continued to feel a sense of shame over his want of military experience. In January 1591, when he fell seriously ill and stone in his bladder was suspected, the idea of dying without any military service distressed him.[2]

Even after his restoration to favour after the May 1598 incident, the intrigues against him continued. The most pressing need was to disentangle the complex situation in the Deccan. Its handling required both military and diplomatic acumen and the nobles, after the return of the Imperial court to Agra, prevailed upon Akbar to send Abu'l Fazl on this mission. He says:

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[1] *AN*, III, pp. 477-78; Bev, III, p. 719.

[2] *Ibid*, III, p. 586; *Ibid*, III, p. 890.

> "In consequence of their intrigues I was sent off on the 25 Dai (about 5 January, 1599) to bring Prince Sultan Murad to Court. An order was given that if the officers of the Deccan should take upon themselves the supervision of the country, I was to come to court with the Prince. Otherwise I was to send him off, and to work in harmony with the others, and to act according to the opinion of Mirza Shahrukh. On this account the Mirza received a flag and drum and was sent to Malwa to equip his soldiers from his own *jagir*."[1]

The Deccan

In order to explain the true dimensions of Abu'l Fazl's difficulties we give below a brief outline of the Deccan problem. Annexation of the Deccan to the northern Indian empire had been the policy of the Delhi sultanate whenever it felt strong enough. There were in Akbar's time five independent Deccan kingdoms—Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golkunda, Berar and Bidar. They had risen on the ruins of the once powerful Bahmani kingdom. Although in perpetual conflict amongst themselves, they were not slow to unite against external dangers. Their crushing defeat of the Vijayanagar ruler Rama Raya early in 1565 at the battlefield of Banihatti, more commonly known as Talikota, was a glorious feather in the cap of their unity. But the unity was, shortlived because, the conquest whetted the appetite of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur for territorial expansion. Ahmadnagar wished to annex Bidar and Berar, while Bijapur sought lands equally vast in the Carnatic.[2]

The small principality of Khandesh lay at the north of these kingdoms since the decline of the Delhi Sultanate in the later fourteenth century, the Sultans of Malwa and Gujarat; contended for it; after their extinction, it lay conspicuously exposed to Mughal imperialistic designs.

The Deccan policy of Akbar resembled his Rajput policy. He realized the difficulties of governing the Deccan territories from a capital far in the North and wished to make their rulers *mansabdars*, leaving their ancestral territory in their hands as *watanjagir* and offering them even more *jagirs* in the Mughal

[1] *AN*, III, p. 749; Bev, III, p. 1119.

[2] *Tarikh i-Firishta, rauza* III, p. 140-49.

territory commensurate to their *mansab*. Abu'l Fazl's letters to the Deccan rulers, of which some have been discussed earlier, indicate that what was demanded of them was the acknowledgment of Akbar as the paramount authority diffusing benevolence, justice and prosperity to their kingdoms. As a consequence the Deccan rulers were also required to enter into matrimonial alliances with the imperial family and the high Mughal *mansabdars*. It was only after the failure of this policy that an invasion and annexation of any Deccan territory was attempted.

Khandesh felt Akbar's military operations against Malwa as early as 1562, when Baz Bahadur, the ruler of Malwa, took refuge in Khandesh territory. The pursuing Mughal army entered Burhanpur and committed much plunder there. Miran Mubarak Shah, its ruler, saved himself by shutting himself up in the impregnable fort of Asirgarh.[1] Two years later when the rebellion of his Turani governor 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg brought Akbar in person to Malwa and he encamped at Mandu, Miran Mubarak Shah decided to enter into friendly relations with Akbar by offering him his daughter in marriage.[2]

Akbar's conquest of Gujarat in 1572 made the situation more complex for Khandesh; now sandwiched between two ambitious powers; Akbar in the north, and Ahmadnagar his immediate neighbour in the Deccan. Finding Akbar the more imminent danger, Khandesh decided to throw in her lot with the Deccan rulers. At the end of 1576 Akbar ordered Shihabu'd Din Ahmad Khan to reduce Raja 'Ali Khan of Khandesh to submission by a show of force.[3] The army besieged him in Burhanpur, but rumours of disturbances in Gujarat precluded extreme steps, and the army departed after ravaging the country and receiving tribute from Raja 'Ali Khan.[4] Raja 'Ali afterwards won the gratitude of Akbar by surrendering to him Muzaffar Husain Mirza, the rebel leader and pretender to the Sultanate of Gujarat.[5] However, his loyalty was always suspected and in 1585 Fathu'llah Shirazi was sent to advise him to remain steadfast on the path of devotion, but returned without the positive assurances he sought.[1]

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[1] *AN*, II, p. 168; Bev, II, p. 258.

[2] *Ibid*, II, p. 230; *Ibid*, II, p. 351.

[3] *Ibid*, III, p. 198; *Ibid*, III, p. 279; *MT*, II, p. 244; Lowe, p. 251.

[4] *MT*, II, p. 250; Lowe, p. 257.

[5] *AN*, III, p. 233; Bev, III, p. 330; *MT*, II, p. 260; Lowe, p. 253.

Mir Murtaza, Khudawand Khan and some other nobles of Ahmadnagar, failing in an attempt to seize power in their homeland, had presented themselves at Akbar's court in Lahore and appealed for assistance. Akbar ordered Khan i-A'zam, the governor of Malwa, and Shihabu'd Din Ahmad to conquer Berar for the rebel chiefs, but the dissension between the Mughal commanders foiled the efforts of the Imperialists; a campaign in 1586 met no better success. Raja 'Ali Khan and the Berar and Ahmadnagar armies fought against the Imperial forces.[1]

Meanwhile the Emperor got another pretext to interfere in the affairs of Ahmadnagar. Civil wars, provoked by the insanity of Murtaza Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar (1565-88) drove his brother Burhan into exile after the collapse of his attempt on the throne. He finally sought Akbar's patronage in 1588. In May, 1591, his ambition was achieved, after several failures; in his last campaign, help came from Khandesh and Bijapur. But not from the Mughals, to whom he refused the acknowledgment of suzerainty he had undertaken to make in his days of need. This called for the despatch of ambassadors to Khandesh, Bijapur and Golkunda, in July August 1591. Faizi who was sent to Raja Ali Khan succeeded in restoring good relations; it was expected that Raja 'Ali's influence would help acceptance as the paramount authority in the Deccan. From Burhan Nizam Shah II, however, Akbar's envoy Aminu'd Din received only insults and taunting words.

On 14 September 1591, Murad was sent as governor of Malwa. Before his departure Akbar gave him the usual elaborate instructions to govern with justice and benevolence. Abu'l Fazl held a confidential meeting with Murad to discuss plans for action in the Deccan.[2]

Faizi's return from the Deccan in 1593, and the failure of other missions, decided Akbar to mount a vast invasion against the Deccan rulers. At the end of 1593, supreme command was given to Prince Murad, and Khan i-Khanan was made his assistant. Burhanu'l Mulk's administrative incompetence and voluptuous self-indulgence further enfeebled his strife-torn state when he died in April 1595. Factions led by the Abyssinian Ikhlas Khan and the Deccani Miyan Manjhu brought on a Bijapuri invasion and the death in battle of Burhan's young son, Ibrahim Nizam Shah; whereupon each promoted his own puppet king, and the Nizam Shahi state fell into total confusion. But the condition of the imperial army was, no better. Murad had become alienated from the Khan i-Khanan and so other eminent nobles such as Sadiq Khan and Shahbaz Khan were at each other's throats. At the invitation of Manjhu, the imperial army marched towards Ahmadnagar; but repenting rapidly of his folly, Manjhu made a truce with the Abyssinian party and regained the confidence of Chand Bibi, Burhan's sister. As the Mughals approached, he lost heart altogether; carrying his puppet-king with him, he fled to Ausa, 100 miles south-east. Chand Bibi was left in command of Ahmadnagar. She unified the warrying factions in the name of the honour of the Deccanis; Bijapur promised reinforcements: and on 14 December, 1595, the Mughal forces appeared before the walls of Ahmadnagar. On 21 February, 1596 the Mughal army tried to explode five mines they had laid, but the garrison, warned by a Mughal officer, neutralised all but one. The small portions of damaged wall were at once repaired under the inspiring leadership of Chand Bibi. The Mughal forces fought stubbornly until dusk but had to retire disappointed.[1] However forced by scarcity of food and dissensions among her supporters, Chand Bibi agreed to cede Berar to the imperialists and send presents to the Emperor. Realising his own weakness Murad accepted the terms, raised the siege and retired to Berar on 20 March 1596.

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[1] *AN*, III, pp. 489-90; Bev, III, p. 740.
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 598-99; *Ibid*, III, pp. 911-14.

Although party strife sapped the vitality of Ahmadnagar, the army continued to harass the Mughals, and the Berar guerrillas impeded the establishment of Mughal control. Meanwhile Bijapur and Golkunda forces joined Chand Bibi. Early in February 1597 a major battle was fought over several days between the Mughals and the united Deccanis at Ashti, 12 *kos* from Pathri. Raja, 'Ali Khan lost his life fighting with the imperialists, who succeeded, however, in driving the Deccanis from the field. The Khan i-Khanan himself fought valiantly.[2]

Although the victory was decisive its fruits were soon thrown away. Murad urged the immediate conquest of Ahmadnagar, while the Khan i-Khanan insisted on the consolidation of Berar.

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[1] *AN*, III, pp. 699-701; Bev, III, pp. 1045-48.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 718-20; *Ibid*, pp. 1070-72.

Disgusted with their quarrels, Akbar recalled them both. The Khan i-Khanan repaired to the Court but Murad lingered in the Deccan. Akbar knew that a little foresight and courage on the part of his commanders could at that moment make him the master of the Deccan, for it was dissolving in chaos; and knowing this, he resolved to send Abu'l Fazl to the Deccan. A letter of strong reproof was sent to Murad, in which his assistants were not spared.[1]

As Raja 'Ali Khan had fallen fighting for the Mughals, it was presumed that his son and successor, Bahadur, would support the Mughal invasion of Ahmadnagar. When Abu'l Fazl reached Burhanpur he encamped there to ensure Bahadur's loyalty. He was surprised to find that Bahadur was not prepared to fight. He tried to win Abu'l Fazl with gifts but he replied:

> "I had made a vow to God that I would not take anything from any one unless four conditions were fulfilled: "1st, Friendship, 2nd, that I should not over-value the gift; 3rd, that I should not have been anxious to get a present; 4th, that I should be in need of it. I grant that three conditions have been fulfilled. But how can we get over the fourth? The Shahinshah's kindness has erased the image of desire. In the market of enlightened action, silver and gold have become a burden."[2]

To Abu'l Fazl's disappointment with Bahadur was added disturbing news about Prince Murad's health. Failure to seize Ahmadnagar was a bitter disappointment to him; the death of his small son Mirza Rustam in November 1598 sunk him in gloom, and in a state of chronic grief he abandoned himself to hard drinking. He neglected his health, concealed the symptoms of his decline, and his condition began to deteriorate rapidly. At Shahpur, where he returned, the treatment of the physicians made some impact upon his health but the news of Akbar's return to Agra and his recall to Court caused his self-confidence to disintegrate entirely. On the advice of his counsellors, he hurriedly set off towards the frontier of Admadnagar as a lame excuse for not going to Agra.

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 744; Bev, III, p. 1112; Muraqqa' (Ms. Hyderabad Archives), ff. 15b-16b.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 752; Bev, III, pp. 1123-24.

Abu'l Fazl informed Akbar of Murad's serious illness, whereupon Akbar sent Hakim Misri and Asaf Khan to bring the prince to Agra but if Murad was too ill to travel, Asaf Khan was to return to Court at once. The Prince set off from Shahpur, but could not go far at Tamurni, he fell seriously ill, and at Dihari or Dihbari on the banks of the Purna, 20 *kos* from Daulatabad, he was seized with the last fits of delirium tremens.

When within thirty *kos* of the Prince's camp, Abu'l Fazl learnt that he was dying. He rushed to the camp, finding it in great confusion; some high officers were contemplating sending him back to Shahpur, but Abu'l Fazl prevented them; and soon afterwards, on 2 May 1599, the Prince breathed his last.[1]

A very heavy responsibility was now imposed upon Abu'l Fazl. The troops were in a state of confusion, and soldiers were deserting on one pretext or the other. Their salaries had not been paid. The leaders were equally irresponsible, and most officers too wanted to leave the Deccan. The Turani nobles in particular were disaffected, Abu'l Fazl's enemies suppressed his despatches, and tried to keep the Emperor in the dark. It needed considerable insight and determination to preserve his equanimity, fortunately, Abu'l Fazl shewed both.

He first sent the dead body of the Prince to Shahpur and then proceeded to conciliate the troops, distributing all the money on hand or able to be borrowed. He opened the Prince' treasury, and sold all but the choicest goods and equipments. Thus arrears of salaries were paid, and some advance given.[2] Farid Bhakkari says that words failed him to describe either Abu'l Fazl's administrative genius or the pomp in which he lived. Forty luxurious tents were pitched for the Shaikh. In one large tent, rich dishes were daily served up and distributed among the nobles; in another tent hand by *khichri* was cooked all day and was served to anyone, rich or poor.[3] This splendour and benevolence seems to have conciliated both officers and men, and in a short time many deserters returned.

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[1] *FS*, ff. 220a-b; *AN*, III, pp. 753-54; Bev, III, pp. 1126-29; *INJ*, p. 461. According to Jahangir, Murad died in the neighbourhood of Jalnapur in the province of Berar (*R & B*, p. 34).

[2] *AN*, III, pp. 754-55; Bev, III, pp. 1129-30, *INJ*, p. 461.

[3] *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin*, p. 72. It seems that anecdotes about his unbelievable appetite became current about this period. S. H. Hodiwala discusses the problem at some length. (*Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, Bombay.)

The next step was to guard the imperial territories; not difficult with a contented soldiery. Guards were posted on all frontiers and except Nasik, peace returned everywhere. As the troops, if idle, would soon be a problem, Abu'l Fazl planned to send expeditions against disaffected chiefs. Sundar Das, an officer under him, besieged Taltum in Berar and after three months, on 3 August 1599, captured it.[1]

Mirza Shahrukh, who was given the supreme command was first of all reluctant to lead the campaign but the exhortations of Abu'l Fazl's envoys persuaded him to join the Shaikh, who gave him a warm welcome.[2]

At this time the garrison of Daulatabad promised that if granted a safe conduct, it would surrender the fort; but alleged that some Abyssinian and Deccanis in that neighbourhood were preventing them from joining the imperialists and asked that an army should be sent to chastise them. Abu'l Fazl sent 1,500 of his own horse and an equal number of other soldiers under the command of his son 'Abdu'r Rahman. The extensive tract of Biragarh, to the east of Ahmadnagar and in the eastern part of Berar, had been seized by an officer of Prince Murad named Sher Khwaja. Some of the small imperial force holding it proposed surrender. Sher Khwaja resisted but was forced to take refuge in Bilnagarh, which the Deccanis besieged.[3]

Abu'l Fazl immediately marched to his relief, despite the rainy season, and summoned 'Abdu'r Rahman from Daulatabad. A ford was secured and some troops bravely crossed the Godawari; Abu'l Fazl himself following them against heavy odds. This determined attack disheartened the Ahmadnagar troops and after some skirmishes, they raised the siege and retired on 29 August 1599, only fourteen days after Abu'l Fazl set off to relieve Sher Khwaja.[4]

Abu'l Fazl, wishing to strike while the iron was hot, tried to invade Ahmadnagar immediately but his troops did not co-operate. Sher Khwaja undertook to defend Biragarh only when he found himself in danger of supersession by 'Abdu'r Rahman.

Abu'l Fazl established his headquarters on the bank of the flood swollen Godawari. Fresh equipment was secured, money profusely distributed, and promotions granted. Gujarat revenues recently received helped in the difficult task of purchasing the willing co-operation of the officers and soldiers.[1]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 756; Bev, III, p. 1131.
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 758-59; *Ibid*, pp. 1134-35.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 758; *Ibid*, p. 1131.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 760; *Ibid*, pp. 1136-37.

Meanwhile the situation at Ahmadnagar was rapidly getting out of the control of Chand Bibi, who ruled in the name of her nephew Bahadur Nizam Shah. Abhang Khan, an Abyssinian noble, fought against the Mughals outside the fort of Ahmadnagar; but he also made many an attempt, all unsuccessful, to seize the fort and displace Chand Bibi. Efforts to reconcile different factions made no headway. Chand Bibi preferred to surrender the fort to the Mughals rather than suffer the humiliation of submitting to her own domestic slave Abhang Khan. She therefore assumed a double role; on the one hand she sent messages to Abu'l Fazl offering terms of surrender, while on the other she exerted herself to the utmost in forging unity among the disaffected parties of her state. Abu'l Fazl encamped at Shahgarh, and bluntly told Chand Bibi that exchanges of messengers and other delaying tactics would serve her no more; she must now decide her final course of action.[2] To Akbar he wrote that the conquest of the Deccan would not be very difficult, for Ahmadnagar was receiving no help from Bijapur and Golkunda. But the co-operation of Mirza Shah Rukh and Shahbaz Khan was absolutely essential.

Supplies in Ahmadnagar being scarce, Abu'l Fazl began to press Chand Bibi to surrender. She professed readiness, on condition that Abhang Khan was crushed and Bir was assigned as her *jagir*. She also promised to send her nephew Bahadur to the Emperor, and follow him afterwards to Court. Meanwhile Abhang Khan initiated military operations on two fronts. One army marched through Daulatabad where families of the imperial troops were encamped, to Berar; another made for Elichpur. Abu'l Fazl had not received the looked-for reinforcements; yet by marching out in person he forced Abhang Khan to recall the army despatched to Berar. Another Mughal detachment defeated the troops sent against Elichpur.[3]

By this time Akbar who had left Agra on 16 September 1599, had reached Bhilsa. Prince Daniyal was eager to earn the glory of the conquest, and sent Abu'l Fazl a curt command:

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[1] *AN*, III, pp. 761-62; Bev, III, pp. 1138-39.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 765; *Ibid*, p. 1143.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 767; *Ibid*, p. 1144, *INJ*, II, p. 564.

> "Far and wide, your energy has made a great impression. We desire that Ahmadnagar should be won in our presence. You must restrain yourself from thoughts of taking it on your own. We will now make no further delay on the road."[1]

After Prince Murad's death, Prince Salim had been selected for the command of the Deccan but was reluctant to take up the task. His surviving brother Daniyal was accordingly appointed, on 23 June 1599. Akbar accompanied him to the first halting place. A *farman* was sent to Abu'l Fazl that the Emperor wished to recall him to his presence but he should wait and help the Prince in the administration of the territory.[2]

Daniyal, however, marched very slowly. Akbar, thereupon decided to encamp in Malwa and watch the operations, giving out that he was hunting. Agra was entrusted to Qilich Khan; Prince Salim reconciled with his father by the good offices of his grandmother, was ordered to march against the Rana of Mewar. The Khan i-Khanan with renewed marks of favour was ordered to join Daniyal.[3]

When the Prince reached Burhanpur, Bahadur refused to go to see him; a deliberate insult, which traditionally could be expressed only by submission. Abu'l Fazl stayed at Mungi Patan on the east bank of the Godawari and the Prince, embarrassed, awaited orders. The Emperor, encamped at Kaliyada near Ujjain, saved the situation by pretending that Bahadur must have ignored the deputy in order to wait upon the master. Miran Sadr i-Jahan was sent ostensibly to assuage Bahadur's apprehensions, if he had any, but in reality to ascertain the true state of affairs.[4] Little as Akbar wished to waste time fighting against Khandesh, a rebellious Khandesh in his rear would be great danger to his forces in the Deccan.

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 766; Bev, III, p. 1144.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 757; *Ibid*, p. 1132.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 762-63; *Ibid*, p. 1140.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 767; *Ibid*, p. 1146; *FS*, f. 225b.

War with Khandesh

Bahadur had spent his life, according to custom,[1] in prison. He had no political insight and spent his time in the pleasures of the harem. According to the author of *Zafaru'l Waleh*, he had imprudently alienated many of his father's loyal ministers who were prepared to go to any length in order to get rid of him.[2] Colonel Haig says that "He was evidently weak, sensual, and strongly tinged with superstition. His petulant and foolish defiance of Akbar was evidence rather of lack of understanding than of strength of character, and he certainly entered upon the undertaking without counting the cost."[3]

Learning of Akbar's march to Malwa, Bahadur held a meeting of his nobles and grandees. The minister Afzal Khan and his party were secretly in league with Akbar. They advised Bahadur either to face the emperor bravely or to win him over with gifts; both alternatives were impracticable. Although nothing was decided, the majority favoured a war against Akbar, and this faction resolved that in the event of war, part of the army under Bahadur and his son would defend the fort, and the rest would harass the Mughals by guerrilla tactics.[4]

When the reports of Sadr i-Jahan about the actual situations were laid before the Emperor, effective measures against Bahadur were planned. Shaikh Farid Bukhari was ordered to lead an army to Asirgarh; if Bahadur was still adament, he was to invest the fort and reduce it with all speed.[5] Bahadur, still unresolved to fight, wrote to Shaikh Farid, reminding him of his ancestors' service to the Mughals, and offering to send his son with suitable presents to Akbar. Farid's personal intercession was also solicited Akbar on the receipt of letters thereupon wrote to Bahadur suggesting submit personally and be loyal like his father.[6]

When Prince Daniyal had passed Burhanpur, Abu'l Fazl was ordered to hand over his army to Mirza Shah Rukh and proceed to court. On his way, Abu'l Fazl met Daniyal at Ahu Bara and sent a despatch to the Emperor that much concerted efforts were needed for the conquest of Ahmadnagar.[1]

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[1] *Tarikh i-Firishta, maqala* VI, p. 289. According to a letter of Ibrahim 'Adil Shahi II of Bijapur quoted by Fuzuni Astarabadi, Bahadur had antagonized the ruler of Bijapur by seizing two regions in the kingdom of Bijapur (*Futuhat -i'Adil Shahi*)

[2] *Zafaru'l Waleh*, p. 81.

[3] *Indian Antiquary*, July 1918, p. 183.

[4] *Zafaru'l Waleh*, p. 81.

[5] *FS*, f. 227a.

[6] *FS*, f. 228a.

Abu'l Fazl was also ordered to meet Bahadur, to persuade him yet again to surrender but if he failed, he should leave elephants and troops at Burhanpur and hasten to the Court for consultations about future action.[2]

Coming near Asirgarh, Abu'l Fazl encamped there and commanded Shaikh Farid not to wait upon him unless he had met Bahadur. Abu'l Fazl spent all his eloquence; Bahadur remained unmoved. Next day Shaikh Farid saw him and they sent a note of the proceedings of the previous day to the Emperor.[3] Having failed in his mission with Bahadur Abu'l Fazl reached Bijagarh, at the left bank of the Kundi, a tributary of the Narbada, where Akbar was encamped and was greeted by the Emperor with the following couplet:

Serene be the night and pleasant the moon shine,
That I may talk with thee on every subject.[4]

The Siege of Asir

It was now clear that there would be no success against Bahadur without conquering Asirgarh. Akbar himself hastened to Burhanpur, reaching there on 30 March 1600. On 1 April, Khan i-A'zam, Asaf Khan and Shaikh Farid were ordered to besiege Asirgarh. Eight days later Akbar personally arrived under the walls in order to supervise the work at trenches. Abu'l Fazl was ordered to suppress Bahadur's guerillas, scattered throughout Khandesh; his *mansab* was raised to 4,000.[5] He established twenty-two posts throughout Khandesh; appointing his son 'Abdu'r Rahman and his brother Abu'l Barkat to supervise them, with some of his own troops. They dispersed the guerillas, forced them to submit, and created conditions for the peaceful restoration of cultivation and the anticipated guerilla war petered out.

From the beginning of the siege operations many generals of Bahadur opened independent negotiations for terms, and Faulad, one of the best of them, deserted to the Imperialists.[1] Bahadur relied mainly upon the impregnable strength of the fort and the fact that the dearness of the provision in the Imperial Camp might prompt Akbar to patch up a peace. In May he sent sixty-four elephants under his mother and a young son, requesting that he be excused for some time from serving personally, but undertaking to report to the Court later. He also showed willingness to marry his daughter to Prince Khusrau. The Emperor, however, was firm in his demands and informed him that nothing but his immediate personal appearance was acceptable.[2]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 768; Bev, III, p. 1148; *MA*, II, pp. 80-81.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 769; Bev, III, p. 1149.

[3] *FS*, f. 236b.

[4] *AN*, III, p. 768; Bev, III, p. 1148.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 771; *Ibid*, p. 1153.

Asirgarh was one of the strongest forts of India and the rulers of Khandesh had provisioned it lavishly. Impossible to take by storm, it has never fallen but by negotiation. It rises on a spur of the Satpura range, "with an elevation of about 2,300 feet above the sea, and nearly 900 feet above the plain."[3] About twelve miles south stands Burhanpur. Abu'l Fazl writes:

> "In its waist *(kamargah)* on the west and somewhat to the north side there is a noted fort called Maligarh. Whoever desires to enter the great fortress must first pass by Maligarh. Separate from it on the north and north-east, there is a Mali, and that they call Juna Mali. But the wall of it had not been completed. From the east to the south-west, there are smaller hills. To the south there is a high hill called Korhi. (Kodhi) To the South-west there is a high hill called Sapan."[4]

All round these three hills and forts was level ground with neiher trees nor jungle to serve as cover. According to du Jarric the high mountain was five leagues in circuit, and "surrounded by three concentric lines of fortifications, so cunningly constructed that the holders of each line could assist in the defence of the other two. Besides water from a living well, there was within the fort sufficient wood, vegetables, and other provisions to support for many years the seventy thousand soldiers who defended it. It was fortified with three thousand pieces of artillery, most of which were so large that the noise of their discharge was like terrific thunder."[1] Faizi Sihrindi corroborates du Jarric's account and says that after the conquest of the fort ammunition, provisions, and medicine in such large quantity was found there that it was sufficient for the use of several thousand people.[2]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 770; Bev, III, p. 1152.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 771; *Ibid*, p. 1152.
[3] *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 272.
[4] *AN*, III, p. 778; Bev, III, p. 1163.

The Imperialists made the adjoining fortress Sapan their first point of attack. The garrison of Asir made regular sorties, but on 12 June, 1600 Sapan fell to the Imperialists, and the besieged fled to Asirgarh.[3] On 13 August the garrison of Lalang capitulated through want of food in their isolated post.[4]

These two successes were encouraging to the Imperialists, and their pressure on Asir increased. To lay mines or construct *sabat*[5] was impossible; the only recourse was to push the trenches onward. The garrison fired continuously, so that even in the dark nights of the rainy season no man dared to raise his head above the trenches.[6]

As no real resistance had been expected from Bahadur, Akbar brought no heavy ordinance. Some guns were obtained from Parnala, Gawal and Ahmadabad but they were not of much use. Akbar requested Father Xavier to write to the Portuguese authorities at Chaul supporting his own letter requesting artillery and munitions to bombard the fortress, but he refused, saying that it would be "a direct violation of the Christian law." The real reason was, as the Father himself says, that the Portuguese had a short time previously made an alliance with the Faruqi dynasty of Khandesh. This naturally enraged the Emperor, giving an opportunity to du Jarric to call him a barbarian.[8]

The Emperor was anxious to bring the siege to a successful termination as early as possible. News of Prince Salim's insubordinate behaviour had made his presence at the capital imperative. The Imperialists partly through homesickness and partly because of high prices of provisions pressed Emperor to return without conquering Asir. Mughals and Rajputs never had the disciplined tenacity to sustain siege operations, and they did not show it now. Akbar had therefore to turn to all devices to win over the garrison of Asir including bribery, promises of reward, and offers of employment.

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[1] *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. 103. Akbar's letter to Shah 'Abbas Safavi in *Murasalat Sala Lin Safaviyah* (Asafiya, Hyderabad), f. 368.

[2] *FS*, f. 239.

[3] *AN*, III, p. 772; Bev, III, p. 1153.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 773; *Ibid*, p. 1156.

[5] Raised platform or covered passage from which to shoot arrows, bullets or other missiles.

[6] *FS*, f. 234a.

[7] *AN*, III, p. 779; Bev, III, p. 1165.

[8] *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. 107.

Early in June 1600, Abu'l Fazl's sister's son Safdar Khan and a grandson of Raja 'Ali Khan reached Asir from Agra at the Emperor's summons.[1] Safdar Khan was promoted to the rank of 1000 and ordered to use his influence to induce senior officers of the garrison to desert to the Emperor.

Meanwhile the siege of Ahmadnagar, commenced by Prince Daniyal early in April 1600 was making satisfactory headway, the presence of the Emperor near the scene of operation spurred the Imperial commanders to unusual activity. Chand Bibi reopened negotiations for peace but on 3 July, 1600 was murdered at the prompting of Chita Khan[2] an eunuch and head of the party hostile to her. The garrison fought on stubbornly under Chita Khan, but the mines laid by the Imperialists blew up one of the main towers on 18 August, 1600. The next day, they stormed in.[3] The fall of Ahmadnagar disheartened the Asir garrison and raised the prestige of Akbar, impelling Bijapur to send him a congratulatory letter.[4]

Akbar renewed pressure upon Bahadur to surrender unconditionally. Abu'l Fazl again wrote him letters, and in the middle of September 1600 the Emperor sent Shaikh Muhammad Fazlu'llah[5] and Sharif Sarmadi[6] as his envoys to Bahadur, who was not slow in sending envoys and gifts in return, but remained unwilling to surrender to Akbar in person.[7] He sent Shaikh Pir Muhammad Hasan, and his own brother in law and principal swordsman Sadat Khan Bukhari as a fresh delegation to the Emperor. Since they had nothing new to offer, their requests were rejected. Sadat Khan, himself a Bukhari Saiyid, was persuaded by Farid Bukhari to enter the Imperial service, given a *mansab* of one thousand and placed under Farid Bukhari. Some of his retinue who could convince Mughal officers to stand surety for their sincerity were also allowed to stay, and the rest returned to the fort with Pir Muhammad Hasan.[1]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 772; Bev, III, p. 1153; *INJ*, II, p. 468.

[2] His name is spelt Jita Khan, and is also written as Habsha Khan in some texts and manuscripts. Firishta also writes of him as Jita Khan or Chita Khan (*Tarikh i-Firishta*, *maqala* III, *rauza* III.) His translator, Briggs, incorrectly calls him as Hamid Khan.

[3] *AN*, III, p. 775; Bev, III, p. 1159.

[4] *Cambridge History of India*, IV, p. 147.

[5] The celebrated saint Shaikh Fazlu'llah Burhanpuri, who seems to have joined the Mughals.

[6] A *mansabdar* of 200 who was a scholar, poet and free-thinker.

[7] *FS*, ff. 244a-b.

The siege went on: but meanwhile one of the garrison came to Qara Beg an imperialist, and pointed out a secret path by which the wall of Mali could be reached. No credence was at first given to this report but Abu'l Fazl decided to take the risk and offered to direct operations against Mali.

On the dark night of 28 November 1600, he assembled selected men at Sapan. At midnight he sent Qara Beg ahead with a body of men, reinforcing him regularly with the soldiers from the batteries and with his own men. Late in the night, some of the first body entered upon the secret path, and broke open the gate of Mali. Many brave men entered the fort and sounded their drums and trumpets to create panic among the garrison, but the reinforcement did not keep pace with them. The garrison gathered and stood to fight; Abu'l Fazl, therefore, himself rushed to give the lead by mounting the scaling ladder. The garrison fled in despair; in the morning a body of the Imperialists seized Korhi, men under Farid Bakhari and other officers took possession of Juna Mali.[2]

The reduction of the subsidiary hill fortresses disheartened Bahadur. Undoubtedly the fort of Asir was impregnable, and provisions still copious; yet a pestilence, presumably scury and beri-beri broke out and carried off many of the garrison. Bahadur contributed to this outbreak by his folly in admitting refugees, about 18,000 in number, with their horses and cattle. Sanitary arrangements were thrown into confusion and the atmosphere polluted. The author of the *Zafaru'l Waleh* regrets the ruinous results of so elementary a breach of the rules of common sense.[3]

Feeling events slipping from his control, Bahadur sent a further envoy to Abu'l Fazl on the day Mali fell to negotiate peace;

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[1] *FS*, f. 244b.

[2] *AN*, III, pp. 777-78; Bev, III, pp. 1163-65.

[3] *FS*, f. 245a.

but Abu'l Fazl sent him to the Emperor. Akbar in turn sent Ram Das to Bahadur, to settle the terms. He brought back from the fort Muqarrab Khan, the son of the aged Abyssinian commander of the garrison Ya'qut, who was authorized to inform the Emperor that Bahadur was willing to wait upon him in person provided that the fortress and the surrounding country were given him back and the garrison all went free. Akbar accepted this proposal and on Bahadur's request ordered the Khan i-A'zam to escort him to his presence. On the 10 December 1600 he and his two sons were granted audience; but soon they found themselves in the camp of Shaikh Farid Bukhari, under arrest.[1]

Bahadur's surrender did not bring the fall of the fort. Ya'qut continued his valiant defence. Abu'l fazl was ordered to continue his efforts to reduce the garrison to submission. A bombardment was begun from emplacements near a spot named Korhia and other means of persuasion were not neglected; lavish bribes were offered, large promises extended, and finally some of the garrison asked for a letter from their captive king commanding them to surrender, and an Imperial *farman* guaranteeing their lives, property, and honour; thus they might march out with honour.

After some hesitation, Bahadur wrote the letter authorising surrender. When his letter and the Imperial *farman* were received, Malik Ya'qut, assembled all the other princes still in the fort and exhorted them to fight on, as Bahadur's command was issued under compulsion. None would stir.[2] His son Muqarrab Khan approached the walls; from the summit, Ya'qut reviled him for his surrender, and ordered him out of his sight. In shame of disappointment Muqarrab committed suicide on the spot, in the presence of Abu'l Fazl. In a fit of despair, Ya'qut took a heavy dose of opium and died.[3]

Over four days 34,000 people streamed out of the fort, past Abu'l Fazl who stationed himself at the gates. On 17 January, 1601 he sent his son 'Abdu'r Rahman to formally take delivery of the keys. The conquest was officially attributed to Abu'l Fazl.[1]

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 779; Bev, III, p. 1166.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 780; *Ibid*, p. 1168.

[3] *Zafaru'l Waleh*, pp. 86-7; *FS*, ff. 246a-b.

According to du Jarric, Muqarrab Khan's efforts to have Bahadur released enraged Akbar who beheaded Muqarrab. Muqarrab's father committed suicide. The story of Faizi Sihrindi is corroborated by several Indian scholars and there is no reason to doubt it.

Disregarding his solemn undertaking, Akbar imprisoned Bahadur in the Gwaliar fort. In the middle of February 1601 when Daniyal reached Court to pay his respects to his father, the whole of Khandesh was assigned to him and named Dandesh. ([Daniyal's] land), Minuchihr Beg, the Iranian envoy, had long been awaiting his conge. He was now allowed to return with Mir Ma'sum Bhakkari, with a letter for Shah 'Abbas containing an explanation of the delay and a brief account of the campaign.[3]

Smith rejects as false Abu'l Fazl and Faizi Sihrindi's accounts of the fall of Asirgarh, and deems the account of du Jarric correct.[4] But all he had read of Faizi Sihrindi were the extracts in Elliot and Dowson's selections, and he did not trouble to have the translation checked with the original. He ignores Firishta, and had no access to the histories of Gujarat and the Deccan. The Arabic History of Gujarat known as *Zafaru'l Waleh* gives an independent account of Khandesh and the fall of the Faruqi dynasty. A translation of the last portion of its history of Khandesh was published in the *Indian Antiquary* in 1917, the year after the first publication of Smith's history.

Besides Firishta, the histories of the Ahmadnagar and Bijapuri dynasties are also independent sources for events at Asirgarh. Muhammad Amin bin Daulat, the author of the *Anfau'l Akhbar* came to Ahmadnagar in 1599 and lived there until his death. He mentions the fall of Asir in passing. Rofi'u'd Din Ibrahim Shirazi the author of *Tazkiratu'l Muluk*, and Fuzuni Astarabadi, the author of *Futuhat i-'Adil Shahi* both historians of Bijapur and neither friendly to Akbar, broadly corroborate Abu'l Fazl and Faizi Sihrindi; so does Shaikh Nuru'l Haq, the author of *Zubdatu't Tawarikh*.

Smith thought that the account of du Jarric was entitled to special consideration because based on the letters of Father Jerome Xavier, who was present at the siege and whose authority, in Smith's view, is unquestionable. G. H. Payne, who translated parts of du Jarric's work as *Akbar and the Jesuits* and provided large copious notes, has proved convincingly that Smith was not properly acquainted with the nature of the Jesuit sources, which seem based neither on the letters of Xavier nor on the reports of anyone else present during the siege.[1]

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[1] *AN*, III, pp. 780-81; Bev, III, pp. 1168-69; *FS*, f. 246b, *Zafaru'l Waleh*, p. 87.

[2] *AN*, III, p. 785; Bev, III, p. 1175.

[3] *Murasilat i-Salatin i-Safaviyah*, f.

[4] *Akbar the Great Mogul*, pp. 283-84.

Criticising the chronology of Faizi Sihrindi, Smith says: "The dates are impossible. Ahmadnagar fell on Safar 18, the news reaching Asirgarh on the 21st. We are now told that 'on the 17th Safar the royal forces were admitted (to Asirgarh), and the keys were given up', which is absurd."[2] Indeed 17 Safar is absurd; Payne considers it an oversight of Faizi,[3] while Hodivala regards it a copying mistake.[4] It is not certainly known what manuscript Dowson used in preparing his translation; if, as seems likely, he used the manuscript now in the India Office, the mistake is his, for that manuscript clearly gives Monday 17 Rajab (22 January 1601) as the date of the entry of the royal forces into Asirgarh.[5] The date is given in words and no confusion is possible. Dowson's translation and the surmises of Payne and Hodivala (who apparently had no manuscript of Faizi Sihrindi at hand) are at fault, and not, as Smith imagined, the text itself.

Abu'l Fazl and the Ahmadnagar Guerrillas

The imperial troops found service conditions in the Deccan intolerable. A pretext to march homewards was provided by Salim's rebellion. Akbar decided to leave the Deccan to his commanders and set off for Agra on 20 April 1601. Daniyal accompanied him to the Narbada, whence he was given leave to march to the seat of his government at Burhanpur.[6]

Winning the fortresses of Berar and Ahmadnagar had only given a foothold to the Mughals, not control over the country. There the Nizam Shahi commanders were still dominant. Their leaders were Malik Ambar and Raju, both adventurous and tenacious.

Ambar, also known as Ambar Jiu and Ambar Chapu was an

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[1] *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. 256.

[2] *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 299.

[3] *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. 256.

[4] *Studies in Indo Muslim History*, p. 589.

[5] *FS*, f. 246b.

[6] *AN*, III, p. 790; Bev, III, pp. 1183-84.

Abyssian slave, now over fifty, exported to Ahmadnagar from the slave-market of Baghdad and purchased by Malik Dabir, the minister of Murtaza Nizam Shah I. After the death of Malik Dabir, Ambar served many masters, both in Ahmadnagar and Bijapur, joining Abhang Khan who appointed him a commander of 150 horsemen. He very soon emerged as an able guerrilla leader, and after Daniyal's conquest of Ahmadnagar, Mahratta and Muslim guerrillas under him began to ravage the Mughal frontiers. Ambar conscripted all the highway robers in his forces, and soon commanded the strongest military power in the headless kingdom. He raised one Prince 'Ali a scion of the Nizam Shahi dynasty, to the throne, and in his name directed both military and civil affairs with courage and insight.[1]

Raju, a native Deccani was another adventurer who rose to eminence as a leader of guerrillas in the wake of the Mughal and Nizam Shahi wars. Under Abhang Khan's direction, he seized some tracts between Nasik and Trimbak, held by his former master Sa'adat Khan who had joined the Mughals. There was no love lost between Ambar and Raju, both of whom had obtained the status of Malik from their puppet sultan and the conflict between Deccani and foreigner lay not far beneath the surface, but nevertheless they were a potent threat to further Mughal advancement in the Deccan.[2]

High prices and homesickness had made the life of the Imperialists miserable, and they considered the Deccan war a disaster. Prince Daniyal held supreme command, in the middle of February 1601. Abu'l Fazl was ordered to reduce Nasik to submission, and the town and fort of Ahmadnagar were placed under the control of the Khan i-Khanan. This was the most suitable arrangement for with Nasik in guerrilla hands, the Ahmadnagar territory could not be subdued effectively. Abu'l Fazl had already shown his alertness and perseverence.

However, the arrangements were soon changed; Ahmadnagar being considered more important, he was transferred there, and

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[1] *Tarikh Firishta, maqala* III, *rauża* III, p. 165; *Futuhat-i-'Adil Shahi.*

[2] *Ibid.*

Khwajgi Fathu'llah,[1] one of Akbar's personal staff with much support among the court ladies, was appointed in his place. The area soon became a stronghold of the guerrillas, and Khwajgi Fathu'llah was able to do nothing.

In March, Abu'l Fazl set off towards Ahmadnagar, meeting at Barangaon the Khan i-Khanan, who ordered him to march against Murtaza Nizam Shah. Abu'l Fazl made Hasanpur, on the banks of the Godawari, his headquarters. The Nizam Shahi territory in Telingana was in a great turmoil, so Abu'l Fazl asked Mirza Rustam,[2] a son of Sultan Husain Mirza, to lead an expedition against it. He refused, so Abu'l Fazl sent his own son 'Abdu'r Rahman. He crossed the Godawari near Nandir, fought a hotly contested battle against Malik 'Ambar a little to the south, near the river Manjara on 16 May 1601 and defeated him. After this victory 'Abdu'r Rahman left Telingana in the hands of Hamid Khan and returned to his father.

Meanwhile the increasing pressure of Raju's guerrillas in Nasik led Khwajgi Fathu'llah to abandon it.[3] Raju, coming through the ranges, pushed past Daulatabad and seized the region as far as Jalnapur. Disregarding his orders to pursue Murtaza Nizam, Abu'l Fazl left Hasanpur and reached Jalnapur through Ahu Bara. The guerrillas had ravaged the Jalnapur district, so Abu'l Fazl, encouraged the peasants to return,[4] but war against Raju was by no means easy. He avoided pitched battles, hung round the skirts of the Mughal encampments, cutting off supplies, wasting the country, robbing and plundering. Eluding Abu'l Fazl's columns, Raju baffled both capture and defeat. He plundered Daulatabad, Satara and other places with Abu'l Fazl's men on his tail. The skirmishes exhausted the Imperialists, but Raju's forces also suffered serious losses.[1]

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[1] Khwajgi Fathu'llah was the son of Khwaja Habibu'llah of Kashan and was charged with looking after the Emperor's household. In 1578, he was sent by Qutub'd Din to Raja 'Ali Khan who was delaying the surrender of Muzaffar Husain Mirza because the Emperor had departed for the Punjab. Upon news of the Emperor's return to Fathpur, Raja 'Ali complied with the imperial orders. It seems that the Khwajagi's conduct was not favourably reported and he left for Mecca. He returned in 1582 and was pardoned as a result of the intercessions of the ladies of the harem (*AN*, III, p. 286). Three years later he was made *bakhsi*. The *'A'in i-Akbari* mentions him among the *mansabdars* of 350. It seems that he was always a favourite with the ladies.

[2] Muzaffar Husain Mirza and Rustam Mirza, sons of Sultan Husain Mirza and nephews of Shah Tahmasp Safavi, had surrendered Qandahar to Akbar. Muzaffar Husain died during Akbar's lifetime but Mirza Rustam lived to serve under Jahangir, who in 1615-17 promoted him to a *mansab* of 5000. However, Jahangir found him capricious, oppressive and inefficient.

[3] *AN*, III, pp. 791-92; Bev, III, pp. 1184-86; *Tarikh i-Firishta maqala* III, *rauza* III, p. 165; I, II, p. 476.

[4] *AN*, III, p. 794; Bev, III, p. 1189.

Abu'l Fazl's hectic military operations against Raju gave a respite to Malik 'Ambar who reorganised his forces and with seven or eight thousand cavalry, took the Mughal officers in Telingana by surprise and recovered the lost lands in August 1601. The Khan i-Khanan sent no reinforcement, being himself hard-pressed by the light-armed Mahratta horsemen sent out by Malik 'Ambar. At his earnest request Abu'l Fazl left the pursuit of Raju to others, met the Khan i-Khanan in Parnur near Ahmadnagar and from thence marched against Amba Choka and seized it.[2]

At this stage Murtaza Nizam Shah offered terms of peace in order to gain some respite for Malik Ambar and his army. Abu'l Fazl urged that both 'Ambar and Raju should be fought to the death; the Khan i-Khanan, however, influenced by the clamour for a return to Hindustan, decided in favour of peace. It was agreed that Murtaza should become the Emperor's vassal and some territory ceded back to him. Eighteen years after the treaty, which was really nothing but a truce, Mu'tamad Khan, recalling Abu'l Fazl's wisdom, remarked that to give respite to Ambar to reorganise his strength had been the worst of a bad judgment.[3]

Telingana was still in the hands of 'Ambar, so the Khan i-Khanan decided to recover it. Abu'l Fazl was ordered by Daniyal to resume his campaign against Raju. Before proceeding to Nasik, Abu'l Fazl saw the Prince in the middle of February 1602. Like his elder brother he had also given himself to hard drinking; Abu'l Fazl exhorted him to look after the administration personally and not leave his duties to others. The Prince listened to his advice politely, gave him a horse and a robe of honour, and accompanied him on the first stage of his journey to see him off;[4] but he in no way amended his habits.

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[1] *AN*, III, p. 794; Bev, III, pp. 1189-90.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 797; *Ibid*, pp. 1184-95.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 79; *Ibid*, p. 1197; *INJ*, II, p. 479.

[4] *AN*, III p. 802; Bev, III, p. 1201.

Although enemies intrigued at Court against Abu'l Fazl, the Emperor was not slow to honour his friend and counsellor. In March 1602 he was awarded the *mansab*[1] of 5000, one of the highest ranks in the system. He divided the charge of the conquest of the Deccan between the Khan i-Khanan and Abu'l Fazl. Control of Pathri, Berar, Telingana and the pursuit of Ambar was assigned to the Khan i-Khanan; Abu'l Fazl was ordered to exterminate Raju and control the central Ahmadnagar territory from headquarters at Jalnapur.[2] This clear demarcation of duties was both in the Imperial interest and the interest of the commanders. Abu'l Fazl had, however, hardly started his work when Akbar, desperately in need of his help and advice in connection with Prince Salim's rebellion, summoned him and entrusted his command to his son Shaikh 'Abdu'r Rahman.

Thus ended Abu'l Fazl's career as a soldier on active service. As a commander he showed a marked capacity for organisation of details; clarity in conception; boldness in execution; and resourcefulness and adaptability in everything. He proved himself as gifted a tactician in war as in diplomacy. He was a friend of the common soldier, earning their loyalty and co-operation not by virtue of his authority but through his sympathetic dealings and broad humanitarian outlook. He never hesitated to take risks, and was never slack in leading hazardous campaigns personally. He acted with firmness and resolution in his dealings with Chand Bibi and foiled Abhang Khan's attempts to attack the Mughal rear in Daulatabad and Elichpur. He forestalled the guerrilla tactics of the Khandeshis, and his outposts largely foiled their irruptions. He led his forces against Maligarh in face of heavy odds. His organised raids had greatly thinned the forces of Raju and 'Ambar. Under his single command, the final extinction of Ahmadnagar would not have been protracted, as it was, over a generation.

No danger was too great for Abu'l Fazl to face, no obstacle too formidable and no task too hard to perform. To leave the battlefield never entered his mind. The account of his death as related by the contemporary historians, both friendly and hostile, as we shall see, present the image of a chivalrous and dauntless

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[1] *Takmila*, p. 805; Bev, III, p. 1209.

[2] *INJ*, II, p. 481.

Rajput rather than a mere adept in the cunning arts of diplomacy. Had he shown some supple self-regard, rather than chivalrous pride, the story of his end would have been different altogehter.

The situation which prompted Akbar to summon Abu'l Fazl was one of imminent danger. Murad had died and Daniyal, never an effective character, was drinking himself to death; the contestants for the throne were Prince Salim and his son Prince Khusrau. Salim was Akbar's best loved son, and he had trained him for the succession. He loved Salim's eldest son Khusrau, born on 6 August 1587 of Man Ba'i, a daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das, but until Prince Salim openly rebelled in November 1599 during Akbar's absence in the Deccan, no thoughts of putting him in Salim's place entered either Akbar's mind or Abu'l Fazl's. Qilich Khan, a Turani noble of orthodox Sunni views and practices, whom Akbar had appointed the governor of Agra, politely but firmly refused to surrender the fort to Prince Salim. From thence, without meeting his grandmother, Prince Salim set off for Allahabad, set up an independent court and began to mobilise talented nobles to his support.[1] Among them drawn to his side were generally the junior Rajputs, Iranis and the Shaikhzadas, who were concerned only in promoting their self-interest.

Akbar and the loyal senior nobles acted ostensibly as if nothing had happened. They wished to keep the doors of reconciliation open. Akbar sent a letter through Sharif Khan, son of the painter 'Abdu's Samad and a childhood playmate of the Prince with instructions to persuade the Prince to mend matters but the Prince did not listen and Muhammad Sharif, whose *mansab* was not more than 200, decided that his own advantage lay in becoming the chief adviser of Salim and promoter of strife between the father and the son.[2]

Early in 1602 the Prince meditated another attempt upon Agra, but finding the chances of success remote, he turned back to Allahabad at Etawah. To remove the Prince from his seat of power, Akbar appointed him governor of Bengal and Orissa in place of Man Singh, who was recalled to Court. The Prince, however, did not obey, strengthened his defences, and appointed his own governors, assigning Bihar to Sharif Khan.[3] Through the Jesuits, the Prince intrigued for help from Goa, feigning himself a candidate for baptism.[1]

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[1] *AN*, III, pp. 805-6; Bev, III, p. 1210.

[2] *R. & B.*, pp. 14-15.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 14.

It was about this period that Man Singh and Khan i-A'zam Mirza 'Aziz Koka set up the alternative candidature of Prince Khusrau. As the son of Man Ba'i, Khusrau was Man Singh's nephew; but the most enthusiastic supporter of Khusrau was his father-in-law the Khan i-A'zam who even after Jahangir's accession did not leave any stone unturned in making intrigues for the replacement of Jahangir with Khusrau.[2]

In these developments, which took place very rapidly. Akbar's own interests were sadly neglected. Rightly, he thought they would be looked after only by Abu'l Fazl. As his arrival at Court would strengthen his father, Jahangir thought it would be damaging to his own position. He says,

> "I promoted Raja Bir Singh Deo, a Bundela Rajput, who had obtained my favour, and who excels his equals and relatives in valour, personal goodness, and simple heartedness, to the rank of 3,000. The reason for his advancement and for the regard shown to him was that near the end of my revered father's time, Shaikh Abu'l Fazl, who excelled the Shaikhzadas of Hindustan in wisdom and learning, adorned himself outwardly with the jewel of sincerity, and sold it to my father at a very heavy price. He had been summoned from the Deccan, and, since his feelings towards me were not honest, he both publicly and privately spoke against me. At this period when, through strife exciting intrigues, the august feelings of my royal father were entirely embittered against me, it was certain that if he obtained the honour of waiting on him (Akbar) it would be the cause of more confusion, and would preclude me from the favour of union with him (my court)."[3]

He sent a messenger to Bir Singh Deo Bundela asking him to intercept Abu'l Fazl and kill him. For this murder, due rewards were promised. Bir Singh who was then in rebellion, was tempted by the Prince's promises and accepted the commission.

Leaving his charge in the Deccan in July 1602, Abu'l Fazl marched through Sironj, where he left the troops he had brought from the Deccan in order to suppress the rebellion of one Indra Jit Bundela. For his own escort, he took a small contingent of troops of the governor of the place Gopal Das Nakta.[1] Despatches from Abu'l Khair and Abu'l Fazl's friends began to arrive, informing him of Bir Singh's plans; but Abu'l Fazl paid no attention. Asad Beg, his most devoted servant, whom Abu'l Fazl had ordered to suppress the rebellion of Indra Jit Bundela, says that he urged his master to allow him to escort him as far as Gwaliar but Abu'l Fazl forbade it, and set off from Sironj with a very small contingent.

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[1] *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, pp. 69-70.

[2] *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin*, p. 92.

[3] *Tuzuk*, p. 10; *R & B*, pp. 24-25.

He heard at Ujjain that Bir Singh had blocked the road, but attached no importance to the news. At each stage as he marched on, he was warned of the danger but did not change his decision. On 9 August 1602, Bir Singh came out from his ambush between Sara'i Barki and Antari, about fifteen miles south of Gwaliar, at the head of about 5,000 horsemen. Gada'i Khan Afghan, Abu'l Fazl's loyal servant suggested, that he with a few men could engage Bir Singh Deo, while Abu'l Fazl should gallop about six miles ahead to Antari where Ra'i Rayan (Tipur Das) was encamped with two or three thousand horsemen. But Abu'l Fazl said that nothing was more disgraceful than fleeing before the enemy for the sake of one's own life. He added:

> "My gracious sovereign has raised me from the rank of a student to the lofty position of an *amir*, a vizier, and a general. On this day if I act contrary to his Majesty's opinion of me, by what name shall I be called among men, and how shall I have a clear countenance among my rivals."

Gada'i reminded him that in face of heavy odds, retirement was no disgrace. However, Abu'l Fazl curtly replied that he was not going to flee from that "unwashed thief."

While they were thus talking, Bir Singh's men fell upon Abu'l Fazl, and overpowered him by the sheer weight of numbers. A Rajput mortally wounded him; the Shaikh tried to leap his horse over a stream but fell. One of his attendants Jabbar Khasa Khail, slew the Rajput, drew the Shaikh from under his horse, and carried him a little off the road, but the Shaikh collapsed.[2]

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[1] Asad Beg, *Waqi'at i-Asad Beg* (Aligarh University Ms.), pp. 3-4.

[2] *Takmila*, pp. 811-12; Bev, III, pp. 1216-18.

Just then Bir Singh Deo arrived. Jabbar tried in vain to conceal the Shaikh. He then attacked Bir Singh's men to prevent them from cutting off his head, but it was severed and sent to Prince Salim. The body was buried at Antari.[1]

Abu'l Fazl seems to have miscalculated the strength of Bir Singh's men, and imagined that an ordinary *zamindar* already in rebellion would not attack him. When faced with the danger, and obliged to choose, whether to lose honour by fleeing or to face death, he chose to die at the height of his glory. Keshava Das, the celebrated Hindi poet of the Bundela court corroborates in his famous epic the words ascribed to him by Persian scholars;

"You say run away,
The enemy is thundering on all sides.
If I am killed running away,
What will the people say of me?
Both in running and fighting death is certain,
I shall run away if I can,
But I have the fetters of honour in my feet.
And the burden of the Emperor's love on my head.[2]

The news of Abu'l Fazl's death shocked the courtiers. It was midday, and the Emperor was watching the flights of pigeons, when Shaikh Farid Bakhshi conveyed the news to him Akbar uttered a cry and became insensible. For several days he was exceedingly sad.[3] He severely censured the Prince and seems to have never forgiven him. The *Takmila* offers two chronograms:

Waqi'at i-Asad Beg, p. 9; *INJ*, II, p. 487; *Mujmal Mufassal*, f. 197a; de Laet, p. 167; *Takmila*, pp. 813-14; Bev, III, pp. 1219-20.

[2] Translation in *Calcutta Review*, May 1924, p. 247.

[3] *Takmila*, p. 813; Bev, III, p. 1219. *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin* gives a different story. It says that according to the old Chaghta'i custom, news of the death of a prince is not conveyed to the Emperor directly. The deceased prince's *wakil* wraps a blue handkerchief round his wrist and salutes the Emperor. This procedure was followed in conveying the death of Prince Murad and Daniyal. After the death of the Shaikh none of the Emperor's favourites dared convey the news to him openly. The Shaikh's *wakil* wrapped a blue handkerchief round his fist and saluted the Emperor; later he told what had happened. The Emperor said that had Salim wished to seize the throne, he ought to have killed him and spared the Shaikh. He recited the following extempore verse:

Our Shaikh in his zeal rushed to meet me,
In his desire to kiss my feet, he came without head and feet. (pp. 74-75)

> "The truth-seeking vizier of the Shahinshah" and "Abu'l Fazl the enlightened."[1]

A tragedy so great as this for Akbar would have given a fine opportunity for Badauni to vent his spleen on Abu'l Fazl's death; but he was either dead, or past writing. Khan i-A'zam Mirza 'Aziz Koka, however, wrote, quite in Baduni's spirit:

> "The sword of the miracle of God's Prophet cut off the head of the rebel."[2]

The event must have rejoiced the hearts of the orthodox Sunni 'ulama and sufis but sufis with faith in God's mercy remembered him with respect, as several anecdotes ascribed to them show. It is said that the Shaikh appeared in a dream to the Khan i-A'zam and said that the chronogram of his death should be ***banda Abu'l Fazl*** (the slave Abu'l Fazl). He reminded him that God's mercy is boundless, none need be disappointed.

Another tetsimony was given by Shaikh Abu'l Ma'ali Qadiri, the nephew, son-in-law and spiritual successor of Shaikh Dawud.[3] He says that he once had a very low opinion of Abu'l Fazl. Once he dreamed that the Shaikh was brought before the Prophet Muhammad who said that he had committed heinous sins in his lifetime but, God's grace being unlimited, he was forgiven because of the following invocation in his *Munajat*.

> O God! You honour the good for their virtuous deeds;
> be gracious to bad out of your mercy.[4]

In his helplessness, Akbar censured Abu'l Fazl's servants, such as Asad Beg, who did not accompany him to the scene of the murder.

He ordered Ra'i Rayan to hunt out Bir Singh and bring his head. Raja Rai Sing of Bikaner, and Ram Chandra Bundela were ordered to assist; but the task was not an easy one. The dense forests, rapid streams and steep hills of Bundelkhand shielded Bir Singh and his party from the Emperor's vengeance. Once they besieged him in the fort of Irij, on the banks of the Betwa, but he escaped in the night. The Emperor was annoyed but the blame could be fixed on none.[1] He then gave the principal command to Abdu'r Rahman, the Shaikh's son, but the elusive chief could not be seized.[2]

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[1] *Takmila*, p. 813; Bev, III, p. 1219.

[2] *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin*, p. 75.

[3] *MT*, III, pp. 102-105; Haig, pp. 153-57.

[4] *Zakhiratu'l Khawanin*, p. 76.

After Jahangir's accession Bir Singh presented himself to the Emperor to reap his expected reward and was raised to the *mansab* of 3000. Favours were piled upon him throughout the reign and he died peacefully in the same year as his patron.

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[1] *Takmila*, p. 816; Bev, III, p. 1225.

[2] *Waqi'at i-Asad Beg*, pp. 24-26.

CHAPTER 14

ABU'L FAZL'S CHARACTER AND HIS PLACE IN HISTORY

Controversies over Abu'l Fazl have been raging from his first rise to prominence until the present day. The disputants have not particularly troubled to analyse his character, or to estimate his importance; rather have they striven to place him in this or that religious category, referring not to his personality but to his conformity, or otherwise, with their own conception of Islamic orthodoxy.

Yet he has not been easy to fit into a pre-determined place, as Badauni was one of the first to find. Under the year 987/1578-79 he relates, that he had been discussing the sources of Islamic history with Abu'l Fazl, and asked him to which of the known *mazahib* (broadly, religious more narrowly, the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence) he felt himself most attracted. Abu'l Fazl answered that he wished "to dally for some time in the vale of infidelity." Badauni related: "It would not be a bad thing if you were eventually to submit to the yoke of marriage: there is a verse:

> "By the help of God, he took the yoke of the Law upon himself;
> [He lifted it] from the neck of the world: Peace be to his memory."

But Abu'l Fazl merely smiled and took his leave; Badauni, irritated at the thought that Abu'l Fazl's growing importance could allow him to parry an impertinent question with easy flippancy, reflected upon the unsuccessful litigant's lament : "One favour from the Qazi is worth more than a thousand witnesses."[1]

As Abu'l Fazl's consequence grew, and his influence increased, relations between him and the traditional orthodox of Badauni's type withered and died. Abu'l Fazl did not show any chagrin, even if he felt regret; but the orthodox found no language too harsh to revile him. Atheist, heretic, apostate *mujtahid* of the Emperor's new religion; these were the accusations, spitefully flung out but never calmly proved.

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[1] *MT*, II, pp. 562-63; Lowe, p. 270.

In Aurangzeb's reign, Khwaja Kalan, the elder son of the celebrated Naqshbandi saint, Khwaja Baqi B'illah (*c.* 1563-1603) wrote a short treatise, entitled *Mublighu'r Rijal*, on sufism and some non-Sunni movements of recent times. Shaikh Abu'l Fazl is represented as a man whose memory is cherished by the orthodox; yet following Badauni he says that Abu'l Fazl's father Shaikh Mubark, from Sultan Sikandar Lodi's reign to Akbar's, adopted such religions as were dominant under each, becoming finally a pillar of *ibahat*[1] and *sulh-kul* in Akbar's reign. Abu'l Fazl from his childhood felt himself satisfied with no religion, and even wished to travel to Tibet and China, obtained knowledge of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and several other religions. Although he could not accomplish his desire for travel, he entered the court of the Emperor Akbar, who shared his doubts about religions. This provided Abu'l Fazl with the opportunity to gather scholars and religious works from all over India, and from Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Europe, Iran, Turan and Mongolia. However, no religion could satisfy his scepticism and doubts and he adopted *ilhad*,[2] *ibahat* and materialism. He came to believe in the ethical doctrines of the *hakims* and, after the style of Ibn Muqaffa,[3] wrote *Kalila wa dimna* in his own peculiar style, adding many absurd anecdotes of his own invention. In short, he adopted all the heretical beliefs and customs that were current. After the arrival of Mir Sharif Amuli, a leader of the Basakhawani faith, Abu'l Fazl's views and beliefs crystallised further, and in his writings he began to follow the Basakhawani methods. But at the instance of Prince Jahangir, a robber killed him, and his dead body was exposed to great insult.[1]

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[1] *Supra.*

Ibaha "a verbal noun meaning originally 'making a thing apparent or manifest', with the implication that the beholder may take it or leave it, and then 'making a thing allowable or free to him who desires it' "; It is generally applied to antinomian trends among the extremist Shi'is and the Sufis. (J Schact and M.G.S. Hodgson in the *EI*, new, III, pp. 660-62.

[2] *Ilhad* means "departing from faith, impiety, irreligion, infidelity, heresy, idolatry or polytheism." *Mulhid* is one who commits ilhad; "a heretic, pagan, unbeliever; one who denies the resurrection of the dead; an atheist; impious, iniquitous; one who renounces the faith." Like *Ibahat*, this word is also used in a vague sense for any departure from the traditional norms of orthodoxy.

[3] Ibn Muqaffa' (*c.* 720-756), an Arabic author of the Iranian origin and the translator of *Kalila wa Dimna*.

Shah Nawaz Khan (*C.* 1700-58) writes, in his *Ma'asiru'l Umara*: "Shaikh Abu'l Fazl's infidelity is commonly known. Some reproach him with being a despised brahman (Sc., a Hindu), some call him a sun-worshipper, and another group call him a materialist. Some even carry their disgust so far as to call him a *mulhid* and a *zindiq*.[2] Others, attempting to be more just, such as the followers of the *sufis*, who belong to the category of those who defame a few virtuous souls—attribute to him the belief in 'universal concord,' 'broadly based religious views,' the pretence of believing *hama ust*,[3] freedom from the obligations of the *shari'a*, and following the path of *ibahat*.[4]

Such contradictory views, which were to be handed down to posterity with ever more striking colouring, were not unknown to Abu'l Fazl himself. "Although the son of Mubarak," says he, "is at present the object of contradictory views, help us as a warning to mankind; and although the strife of love and hate is kindled over him, the truth-seeking worshippers of God call him Abu'l Wahdat (the father of Unity) meaning an adherent of *Wahdatu'l Wujud* and account him a unique servant of the Supreme Giver. The valorous men of the realm of bravery style him Abu'l Himmat (father of resolution) and deem him one of the wonders of carnal self-denial. Wisdom proclaims him Abu'l Fitrat (father of Sagacity) and considers him a choice specimen of that family. In writings of the common people, which are the noisy dens of ignorance, some attribute worldliness to him and hold him to be one of those plunged into this whirlpool, while others regard him as given to heresy and *ibahat*, and band together in reproof and condemnation."[1]

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[1] *Mublighu'r Rijal* (Delhi Persian Ms. 112, India Office Library), pp. 104a-108a.

[2] Plural *Zanadiqa*, abstract *Zandaqa:* the term used in Muslim criminal law to describe the heretic whose teaching becomes a danger to the State. The term was borrowed in Iraq from the Iranian vocabulary of the Sasanid administration; Among the Mazdaeans, *zandiq* meant a heretic. "In practice, the polemics of the conservatives describe as a *zindiq* or 'freethinker' any one whose external profession of Islam seems to them not sufficiently sincere", Louis Massignon, *EI*, old, IV, pp. 1228-29.

[3] "All is He"—The Persian counterpart of the *Wahdatu'l Wujud*.

[4] *Ma'asiru'l 'Umara*, II, p. 618.

Abu'l Fazl thus shared the misfortune of all religious thinkers, whose personal character has so often been unjustly assailed, whose motives have been distorted, and who have been condemned upon evidence which hardly bears close examination. Late in the eleventh century, a similar urge to unearth the truth from the clashing claims of the Sunni and Shi'i sects of Khurasan, of the orthodox and unorthodox had inspired Ghazali to hammer out a new framework of Sunni orthodoxy with a sufic overtone. His advocacy of Sunnism earned him the title of Hujjatu'l-Islam (the final interpretor of Islam) suiting both the Sunni government and the Sunni population of the Saljuq dominions, where there was widespread uneasiness at the spread of Isma'ili influence.

The intellectual and religious tensions which anticipation of the Islamic millennium produced, and his own studies of non-Islamic religions and philosophy, made Abu'l Fazl a convinced advocate of "universal concord" and peaceful co-existence of Ibn 'Arabi and Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi Maqtul.

His mind was imbued with the spirit of rationalism and intellectual intuition, which was the source of his tolerance; his wide outlook, his craving for knowledge and his restless ambition to extend wider and wider the frontier of learning, which are almost unique in the history of religion. Spurning the mere letter of the law, he urged all religious men to impregnate themselves with the spirit of their faith. He supported Hindus, Christians and Parsis but he never encouraged narrow-mindedness and bigotry in any of them. Just as he begged them to be liberal in their outlook, he repeatedly reminded the Muslims that they must give up their fanatical outlook.

While he contributed to the well-deserved disgrace of those greedy Sunni 'ulama who aggrandised themselves at the expense of the state, and their fellow-subjects, there was no petty mindedness about him. He never grudged help, not even to Badauni, and 'ulama without political ambitions were never neglected by him. Badauni himself admits, that many a time his own orthodox Sunni views were upheld by Abu'l Fazl, while many in whom Badauni had reposed confidence either opposed him or kept silent. Abu'l Fazl's letters to the princes and the Khan i-

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[1] *A'in*, III, pp. 221; Jarrett, III, p. 523-24.

Khanan urge them to visit and honour saints and holy men wherever they could. He himself visited them incognito, was attentive to their discourses, and unobtrusively ministered to their needs.

He regarded his indifference to material prosperity and affluence as a divine blessing.[1] Although Badauni accuses him of flattery and time-serving, Abu'l Fazl himself believed that the awe and majesty of power and authority did not prevent him from speaking the truth, and that no worldly consideration restrained him from the pure pursuit of knowledge.

He was dutiful to his parents, a loving brother, and an affectionate and helpful friend. His relations with Akbar. uninfluenced by mercenary motives, were governed by genuine respect and loyalty to a man who had created conditions allowing every section of society to develop itself without fear of interference from others. No ordinary ruler could have achieved such a success, which amply qualified Akbar for the appellation "Perfect Man."

Abu'l Fazl did not help Akbar to introduce any new religion, nor was any new religion ever intended to be formed. The use of mystical terminology to define the relations between Akbar and his loyal servants, and particularly the four degrees of devotion, were an entirely new departure in the realm of contemporary politics, and called up a new and strong devotion to the throne. The Mughal crown became a bulwark of India's stability and strength. The hopes and fears aroused in the popular Muslim mind by the approaching Islamic millennium, and the consequent political adventurism of the religious leaders could not have been effectively handled without claiming for the Emperor a status above ordinary rulers. The claim that Akbar was a Perfect Man did much to quiet potential political disturbance. Abu'l Fazl strengthened Akbar's long-held belief that the true religion of a monarch was service to mankind, not ritual prayer and fasting. In return for the loyalty of his subjects, a ruler was duty bound to protect them from injustice and persecution. This principle threw the Mughal service open to men of talent; scholars, administrators and soldiers flocked from different parts of the world to join the Mughal service, and made the Mughal government an object of admiration and respect both to Indians and to foreign visitors. The reputation thus gained was fed by a continuing stream of recruits throughout the next century.

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[1] *A'in*, III, p. 220; Jarrett, III, p. 522.

Abu'l Fazl's religious and political ideals, his statesmanship, his directing of the religious discussions and the translation bureau, and his work as a historian, have been discussed earlier and need no further exposition. His misunderstood and much misrepresented scheme of four degrees of discipleship was an important step in transforming the general consciousness of superiority, felt by any elite into loyal devotion to the Emperor and his ideals. Although Abu'l Fazl died, and had no successor, the principles he enunciated remained until the end of the Mughal state. The Chishti and Shattari concept of toleration of Hindus, merely allowing them to devote themselves peaceably to their own traditional professions, he recognised to be essentially negative; he provided a positive ethical justification for Akbar's experiment of offering equal opportunities to all classes of Hindus, which the Emperor had commenced long before Abu'l Fazl was admitted to Court. His explanation of the abolition of *jizyah* was not an apologetic in modern style but an open admission of a plain fact; previous rulers who levied it in India had needed the money it brought in, while the Mughal empire was prosperous enough to discard a source of revenue so oppressive to the vast majority of its subjects. The old concepts of *Kafir Muti 'i-Islam* (Kafir obedient to Islam) or "*Kafir wielding the sword of Islam*" had no meaning for him; his battle cry was:

Kufr wa Islam dar rahat puyan
Wahdahu la sharik lahu guyan
"Polytheism and Islam hasten after Thy Trail;
Both say: "Thou art one, without equal."

Bada'uni, Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq Muhaddis; Shaikh Ahmad Sihrindi (Mujaddid Alf i-Sani), all thought of Abu'l Fazl as the greatest *mulhid* in the history of Islam. The only hope for the future of orthodox Sunnism lay, in their view, in a ruler converted to orthodox Sunni principles as propounded by them, who would be unsparing in his severity: smiting with the sword of Islam, Hindus, Shi'is, and even unorthodox Sunnis who did not share the violent views which orthodoxy prescribed. Yet fifty years of Islam cherishing rule by the orthodox Aurangzeb proved that neither the ruler nor the sword could change the ethical values of Indian Muslims.

The enforcement of Aurangzeb's moral regulations certainly provided a livelihood to a select group of orthodox Sunnis but could do nothing to improve morals and society, which, in succeeding years, sank into a slough of luxury and despair.

The fruits of the great victories of Akbar and his generals were squndered by the futile obstinacy of Aurangzeb and the inanity of his successors; the administrative framework constructed by Akbar and his advisers fell slowly into decay through strain and neglect, and finally collapsed in ruins in the eighteenth century; but the lamps lit by Abu'l Fazl's intellectual and scholarly labours still guide all in his native country who see the value of a broad and generous humanitarian outlook, and recognise the dangers of narrow prejudice and sour self-satisfaction.

APPENDIX–A

MUKATABAT I-'ALLAMI

FOURTH DAFTAR

The first scholar to allege the existence of a fourth *daftar*[1] (volume) of Abu'l Fazl's letters was Maulawi Saiyid Amir Haidar Amir Husaini Wasiti Bilgrami, a grandson of Mir Ghulam 'Ali Azad Bilgrami (1704-83). This man who died about 1802, wrote a work entitled *Sawanih Akbari* at the request of William Kirkpatrick (1754-1812) a military officer, and Persian interpreter to several Commanders-in-Chief and Governors-General, who left India in 1801. Only the first volume of *Sawanih Akbari* now survives, and it ends in 987/1579-80. The second volume, relating to the period of Abu'l Fazl's greatest influence, is lost;[2] so the contents of this fourth *daftar*, almost all purporting to have been written after that date, cannot be compared with the only work supposed to have used it.

As the thirst for knowledge of India's past spread among wider circles, many scholars mentioned[3] this precious fourth *daftar* of Abu'l Fazl's letters, and lamented its loss. So recently as 1918, a remarkable discovery appeared to vindicate the authority of Amir Haidar. Saiyid 'Ali Ahsan Marahrawi, transcribed a manuscript which he proclaimed to be the long-lost fourth *daftar* of the *Mukatabat i-'Allami*.

This manuscript now reposes in the Khuda Bakhsh Library at Bankipur, in Patna. It is described thus in that library's catalogue:

"The extremely rare fourth *daftar* of Abu'l Fadl's Letters."

A complete list of the contents follows, and then we read:

"Amir Haydar Bilgrami in his Sawanih-i Akbari followed by

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[1] *The Mukatabat i-'Allami* are given different names such as *Insha i-A'bul Fazl* or *Munshat i-Abu'l Fazl* or *Har Seh Saftar Abu'l Fazl.* The fourth *daftar* is the title of the alleged fourth volume.

[2] Storey, pp. 554-55.

[3] Blochmann, p. 331, note 1.

Muhammad Husayn Azad in his Darbar-i Akbari, mentions the fourth *Daftar* of Abu'l Fadl, which however, was hitherto not found in any copy of Abu'l Fadl's letters.

The present Ms. was transcribed from a copy belonging to Mir Ghulam 'Ali Azad's library, which strangely, was not known to the author of the Darbar-i Akbari, a grandson of Gulam 'Ali Azad. The first copy from the original Ms. was secured by Sayyid Hasan Bilgrami, AH 1217, and subsequently the present Ms. was compared with both copies and crrected with the help of reliable works and dictionaries, by Maulawi 'Abd-ul Jalil, the uncle of the scribe of the present copy. A list of the doubtful words and phrases in the text is given at the end. An index of the names of persons to whom the letters are addressed is given at the beginning.

Written in legible and correct Ta'liq
Dated July, 1918-"[1]

There is much about this entry to arouse one's suspicion. To begin, it might be remarked that Muhammad Husain Azad, who wrote the *Darbar i-Akbari*, was not the grandson of Ghulam 'Ali Azad; his father was Maulana Muhammad Baqir of Delhi, who belonged to a different family.

The antecedents of this Khuda Bakhsh manuscript of 1918 are, not free from doubt; but an analysis of the contents of this pretended fourth *daftar* will prove beyond doubt that it is spurious. Its contents are substantially the same as the well-known collection called the *Ruq'at i-Abu'l Fazl*, lithographed many times late in the last century and early in this. It was not without some celebrity, and it is strange that Saiyid 'Ali Ahsan Marahrawi did not think of it when preparing his copy of "the extremely rare fourth *daftar*."

The following table will show the situation at a glance:

1. 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg	1-15[*]	1-12[*]
2. Prince Murad	15-40	12-27
3. Prince Daniyal	40-53	27-42
4. Emperor Akbar	53-56	42-46
5. Maryam Makani	66-78	46-53

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[*] Page numbers of Khuda Bakhsh copy.

[*] Page number of *Ruq'at i-Abu'l Fazl* (Lucknow, 1876).

6.	Prince Salim	78-91,	53-60
7.	One of the wives of Akbar[1]		60-62
8.	Akbar's daughter and wife of Muzaffar Khan		62-63
9.	Mother of Prince Daniyal		63-64
10.	One of the wives of Akbar		64-66
11.	Daughter of Akbar, Shukr Niyaz Begum		66-67
12.	Parirukh Begum		67-68
13.	Shaikh Mubarak	105-108	68-70
14.	His mother	108-112	70-72
15.	Faizi	112-117	72-75
16.	Faizi[2]		75-78
17.	Shaikh 'Abdu'l Ha'i (described as Abu'l Fazl's teacher)	121-124	78-79
18-19	Shaikh Abu Ishaq (described as his preceptor)	124-129	79-82
20.	Shaikh Bina or Mina, the physician	129-132	82-84
21.	Hakim Humam	132-134	84-85
22.	Hakim Abu'l Fath[3]		86-88
23.	Masihu'z Zaman, Hakim 'Ali		88-89
24.	Fathu'llah Shirazi	140-142	89-90
25.	Mir Ashraf	142-143	90-91
26.	'Urfi the poet	143-147	91-93
27.	Maulana Shikibi	147-149	93-94
28.	Khwaja Husain Sana'i	149-153	94-97
29.	Makhdumu'l Mulk	153-157	97-99
30.	Maulana 'Ismatu'llah[4]		99-100
31.	Mir Saiyid Muhammad Akbar		100-101
32.	Qazi 'Abdu's Sattar (See no. 50)	161-163	101-102
33.	Shaikh Najmu'd Din, *Mufti* of Badaun	163-166	103-104
34.	Badru'd Din Nagauri	166-169	104-106
35.	Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi	169-172	106-107

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[1] In the Khuda Bakhsh copy letters 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12 (pp. 78-80) are addressed to Maryam Makani and letter No. 10 to Begam Jiu. The contents are the same; the title of *Ruq'at* is, therefore correct.

[2] Letter No. 16 in the Khuda Bakhsh copy, addressed to a friend; the contents are identical.

[3] In the Khuda Bakhsh copy, the name of the addressee is Masihuz Zaman contents are identical.

[4] In the Khuda Bakhsh copy, the title of letter No. 30 to a friend and of letter No. 31, "to a Saiyid friend."

36.	Shaikh Nasiru'd Din Sambhali	172-174	107-109
37.	Shaikh Abu'l Barkat		109-110
38.	Shaikh 'Abdu'llah Badauni	177-179	110-112
39.	Shaikh Jauhar Sihrindi	179-183	112-114
40.	Shaikh 'Abdu's Sami' Jaunpuri	183-186	114-116
41.	Shaikh Abu'l Fath Khairabadi	186-187	116-117
42.	Shaikh 'Usman Dehlawi	187-190	117-118
43.	Shaikh Muhammad Qa'im Multani	190-192	119-120
44.	Shaikh 'Abdu'l Ghafur	192-193	120-121
45.	Miran Saiyid Sadr i-Jahan	193-196	121-122
46.	Shaikh Nizam Panipati	196-199	122-124
47.	Mir Ma'sum Bhakkari[1]		124-126
48.	Shaikh Ja'far Bhakkari	202-204	126-127
49.	Hafiz Baqi Khan	204-205	127-128
50.	Khwaja 'Abdu's Sattar	205-208	128-129
51.	Mir Ya'qub Kashmiri	208-211	129-131
52.	A friend on the death of Faizi	211-217	131-131

Although the fourth *daftar* was unknown, the *Ruq'at* were utilised by many Indian scholars. Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad quoted long extracts from it in the *Darbar i-Akbari*[2] and Professor R. P. Tripathi drew upon it in *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*.[3] Muhammad Husain Azad, was astonished to find Abu'l Fazl using abusive language against the Khan i-Khanan, but did not question the authenticity of the *Ruq'at* as a whole. A close examination of both the contents and the linguistic style of the *Ruq'at* shows that they are the fabrication of someone neither fully acquainted with the historical facts nor able to copy the authentic style of Abu'l Fazl. He adopted style of the contemporary 'ulama; why, we shall soon see. Such forgeries were common both in realm of literature and paintings; works ascribed to a famous name always sold well. The demand for Chishti hagiological literature had prompted many scholars to compile fabricated *malfuzat* in the name of Shaikh 'Usman Harwani, Khwaja Mu'inu'd Din, Qutbu'd Din Bakhtiyar Kaki,

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[1] In the Khuda Bakhsh copy, the title is "a Saiyid friend", contents are identical.

[2] Muhammad Husain Azad, *Darbar i-Akbari* (Lucknow), n.d. reprint, pp. 573-84.

[3] R. P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Allahabad, 1959, second ed.), p. 142.

Baba Farid, and others.[1]

Unlike either the *Mukatabat i-'Allami* compiled by Shaikh 'Abdu's Samad, or the *Lata'if i-Faiyazi* edited by Shaikh Nuru'd Din, the present collection starts abruptly without any preface. The first letter, addressed to 'Abdu'llah Khan Uzbeg, is based upon the letters of Abu'l Fazl and Abu'l Fath prepared at Akbar's command for the embassy sent him in 1586.[2] This letter is not a rejected draft, but the forgery of some later author.

Showing none of the diplomatic finesse of the letters drafted by Abu'l Fazl, the present letter bluntly informs the Khan that the Emperor intends to re-conquer the entire empire of his ancestor Timur. It gives a tedious description of Akbar's Indian conquests, and adds that after conquering the Deccan he intends to march upon Khurasan and Iraq (sc) and to circumambulate the holy shrines of Imam Riza at Mashhad. From Iran he wishes to march upon Samarqand, pay his respects at the tomb of Timur and distribute largesse to the holy men of that region. Thence he would march against China, Syria, and Turkey and conquer those lands. After such victories, all the conquered territories would be restored to their former rulers. The scheme of conquests thus compiled, Akbar would visit Mecca and Medina; perform the pilgrimage and endow each individual resident of both places with a stipend to meet his needs for twelve years. He would then return to Agra "by the Akbar Shahi boat."

Such a chimerical scheme never entered Akbar's mind; far less would he have communicated his intentions to the powerful 'Abdullah Khan, who although his kingdom disintegrated at his death was regarded, quite properly, as a standing danger to India.

The rest of the letters are alleged to have been written by Abu'l Fazl to different Indian notables. The letter to Murad is intended to spur him to action in the Deccan and quotes several commonplace anecdotes of Solomon, Joseph, Alexander and Timur drawn from the traditional Mirrors to the Princes. A fantastic anecdote relating to Humayun destroys entirely the credibility of the letter. Eulogising that Emperor's bounty and munificence to his servants, the letter introduces Humayun and Sher Shah: Humayun's

[1] M. Habib, 'Chishti Mystic Records of the Sultanate Period', *Mediaeval India Quarterly*, Aligarh, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 15-37.

servant, Sher Khan was a very wise man and an excellent general. On one Nauruz day, the Emperor's forces were drawn up in review before "the minara of Tughluq Shah." (perhaps a confused allusion to one of the two Asokan pillars set up by Firuz Shah Tughluq in Delhi). Humayun remarked that never had any one possessed so great an army. Sher Khan, a zealous Muslim, at once replied that such blasphemous remarks made it unlawful to remain in the Emperor's service. On the pretext of offering prayers he withdrew; taking his own kinsmen with him, he marched towards Agra. By the time he had reached Fathpur, 1000 hersemen had assembled under his standards; at Agra he seized the treasury. From Sikandra he wrote to the Emperor that he was prepared, since he had been his servant, to permit him to share the Empire. The territories east of the Jumna should be his; Humayun might retain the lands to the west. Inflamed with anger, the Emperor marched against Sher Khan. As the Emperor's pride had made him neglectful of his duties towards his soldiers, 'Abdu'l Ghaffar, his *bakhshi*, decided to desert to that pious Muslim Sher Khan. When the rival armies met in battle, this high-minded desertion proved the ruin of Humayan. His camp was seized by the Afghans; the ladies of the harem, including the future mother of the Emperor Akbar, were captured; the Emperor could escape only by swimming the Jumna. The Afghans hounded him from Delhi, Lahore, Multan, Bhakkar, Thatta to Qandahar, whence he crept to an ignominious refuge with the Shi'i ruler of Iran.

This fantastic tale is pretended to teach Murad the lesson that he must pay strict attention to his army, and look after his servants carefully. But that Abu'l Fazl could compose an anecdote not only absurd from the historical point of view, but highly critical of the faith and morals of his patron's father Humayun is ludicrous; still less would he have showered praise upon Sher Shah, whom in his works he always styles Sher Khan, to show that in his eyes the Afghan supplanter of Humayun was no king, but a mere usurper.

The letter to Daniyal is dated from Agra on the 19 Shahriwar of the 42nd Ilahi year (29 August 1597). It denounces the treachery of 'Abdu'r Rahim Khan i-Khanan; criticising the Prince's heavy drinking and general slackness, it informs him of his own departure for the Deccan. As already shown, Akbar reached

Agra early in January 1599; from there, Abu'l Fazl started for the Deccan where Murad, and not Daniyal, held command.

This letter also informs Daniyal that Abu'l Fazl had read a letter of his to the Emperor, who highly approved of it; in this context it again reminds the Prince to beware of the treacherous Khan i-Khanan, who was friendly with Malik 'Ambar.

Malik 'Ambar was still an obscure officer in 1599; not until the fall of Ahmadnagar did he enjoy more than local significance, and not until his great campaigns in Jahangir's reign did he attain any celebrity. To single him out in 1599, among the nobles of the yet unfallen Ahmadnagar kingdom, is to show not a peerless penchation, beyond even Abu'l Fazl's gifts, but that want of historical perspective so often the mark of the inexpert forger. Again, the Khan i-Khanan showed neither conspicuous laxity nor treachery in Akbar's Deccan campaigns. Even though after the fall of Ahmadnagar he hoped to return to Hindustan, it was under Jahangir, and especially during Shah Jahan's rebellion in the 1620's, that his disaffection to equivocation became notorious. To accord any respect to this concoction would display a credulity almost beyond belief.

The letter addressed to Akbar informs him of the impending fall of Ahmadnagar, and expressess satisfaction with Prince Daniyal's behaviour; he has somewhat restrained himself from excessive drinking. It condemns the Khan i-Khanan's perfidy, and solicits his recall. However, while Ahmadnagar fort was under siege, the Prince was not with Abu'l Fazl and, as we have seen, had ordered him not to storm the fort before his arrival, so that he could reap the glory of victory.

The letters to the ladies of the Imperial harem are full of reproaches against the Khan i-Khanan's treachery and deceit. They ask the ladies to influence Akbar to transfer the Khan i-Khanan elsewhere, and offer Abu'l Fazl supreme command; otherwise to recall him. The author perhaps forgot that Abu'l Fazl never had any direct relations with the ladies of the harem and that this was one of their main grievances against him. For him, to beg their intercession would have been, in those circumstances, absurd.

With the letter to Prince Salim, the author attains the peak of his inconsistency and stupidity. The Khan i-Khanan is vilified once again, and Prince Salim is entreated to take the supreme commad himself as Prince Daniyal's drunkenness would kill him and the Deccan campaign together. The letter expressed surprise at the Prince's failure to go to Agra for offering condolence at the death of his grandmother Maryam Makani, and informs him that Akbar was exeeedingly grieved at this heartless conduct, so remote from propriety and delicacy. It tells the Prince that the Emperor thought his own days were numbered, that the Crown would fall to the Prince, and that he should give no ear to the suggestions of "the son of 'Abdu's Samad." Upon this letter it is enough to say, that its alleged author died more than two years before the illustrious lady whose decease he laments.

The letters to his father, his mother, and Faizi contain no historical information. They seek to present Abu'l Fazl as an orthodox Sunni and a great well-wisher of pious Shaikhs and holy men. A letter to Faizi asks him to disassociate himself from any order of Akbar contrary to the *shari'a* and to oppose them so adroitly that neither the obligations of loyal service were violated nor the laws of obedience p o God infringed; advice highly incompatible with its allege1 author's known views. Another letter asks Faizi to perform the obligatory prayers in congregation.

Abu'l Fazl was educated by his father, and acknowledges no other teacher; the letters addressed to Shaikh 'Abu'l Ha'i as his "teacher", and to Shaikh Abu Ishaq as his "preceptor", need no further comment.

The letter to Makhdumu'l Mulk is most interesting for it embodies an opinion of Abu'l Fazl possibly held by a section of holy men, although the letter itself could not have been written to the Makhdum. It says that the Makhdum was under a false impression if he imagined that Abu'l Fazl was not doing justice to the claims of the pious for grants of land. He had already allotted 40,000 *bighas* of cultivable land to the holy men of Delhi and 10,000 *bighas* to other deserving inhabitants of that city, 20,000 *bighas* had been granted to the holy men of Multan, and 100,000 to holy men of Ajmer and Bahraich. Since the holy men of Jaunpur, were too proud to approach him, he was unable to help them. However, were Makhdumu'l Mulk to send him a list of the names of those worthies, with a brief account of their status, Abu'l Fazl would send each of them a *farman* of grant immediately. Now, while Abu'l Fazl was certainly consulted about grants before Makhdumu'l Mulk was exiled to Mecca in 1580, he did not hold such powers as the letter suggests. His position was quite subordinate. The author, unaware of the procedure in granting *madad i-ma'ash*, concocted this letter on the basis of the traditions current among holy men friendly to Abu'l Fazl's memory.

The letter to Shaikh 'Abdu'n Nabi congratulates him on his firm determination to proceed on pilgrimage to Mecca and informs him that Abu'l Fazl had repeatedly requested the Emperor to give him leave to go on pilgrimage himself; but his request was not granted. Considering obedience to the imperial orders such a great boon, he must needs deprive himself of that great grace; but he deemed his visits to his Emperor *hajj i-Akbar*.[1] While such sentiments could undoubtedly have been expressed by Abu'l Fazl, their tone and style would have been different.

In fact, the style of all the letters is incompatible with Abu'l Fazl's writings. The titles are long; attributes and adjectival clauses are repetitive; commonplace Arabic phrases, typical of the correspondence of the 'ulama, abound. Instead of the *ishraqi* depth and individual thought of Abu'l Fazl, we find in the *Ruq'at* arguments based mainly on Quranic verses. In some letters, a verse of the Qur'an is quoted in every second line. Expressions such as *nami chalad* meaning "impossible" could not have been used by Abu'l Fazl; this is an Indian Persian usage, resembling the idiomatic Urdu, and quite unclassical. The repetition of the common place Persian and Arabic idioms found in the "fourth *daftar*" is quite foreign to Abu'l Fazl.

The most probable conclusion is, that the manuscript of 1918, and the whole story of the "fourth *daftar*," proceed from a regrettable misunderstanding, founded in ignorance of the well known collection called *Ruq'at i-'Allami*. To presume a fraudulent intention in the proponents of a fourth *daftar* of Abu'l Fazl's letters would perhaps be uncharitable, in the absence of further evidence.

The *Ruq'at* themselves seem to have been composed by an 'alim, neither very learned nor very perceptive, trained in the traditional *madrasas* of the seventeenth century. By Shah Jahan's time the epistolary style of Abu'l Fazl had become a model universally accepted, despite its elaborate artificiality. But that style had been mastered by the Hindus, Brahmanas and Kayasthas, whose hold on the revenue departments of the Empire was growing daily stronger; and however worthy Abu'l Fazl's language might have been thought of imitation by orthodox Muslims, his generous ideas were repugnant to their narrow minds. To some teacher, therefore, reluctant to learn from Hindus, apprehensive lest exposure to Abu'l Fazl's opinions addle the brains of his young charges, it might have occurred to produce an expurgated selection; and finding it impossible to present the style without the man, he might have summoned his imperfect historical knowledge to aid him in producing, for the edification of the orthodox, this rather feeble forgery.

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[1] Only letter No. 4 is addressed to Akbar.

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1	9	Balban (1246-1266)	Balban (1266-1287)
15	38	*Nagatu'r Rashid*	*Najatu'r Rashid*
21	9	(*sin*)	(*sinf*)
26	21	antimonian	antinomian
27	10	Abl'l Khair	Abi'l Khair
31	21	*Fawa'idn'l Fuwad*	*Fawa'idu'l Fuwad*
39	14	Baba Rain or	Baba Ratan or
41	35	Safai Saiyids	Safavi Saiyids
49	29-30	Husain Shah of Kashmir (1472-04)	Hasan Shah of Kashmir (1472-84)
108	30	fenquiry	enquiry
108	31	avours	favours
117	2	*ahrif*	*tahrif*
119	9	conduct *sufis*	conduct towards sufis
120	31	2+3+4+9	2+3+4=9
120	31	2+2+3+3+4+4+18	2+2+3+3+4+4=18
145	11	reviewed	revived
145	15	Umada	Jumada
152	18	religions	religious
165	3	Hakin Huam	Hakim Humam
165	32	thus book	thus took
171	12	through him	through him[2]
171	14	reduce them[3]	reduce them[4]
171	19	issued[3]	issued[4]
185	11	Hisn ame isn ot	His name is not
186	7	Kambon	Kamboh
193	30	he religion	the religion
199	21	In 1912	In 1612
202		missing footnote[1]	*Tuzuk i-Jahangiri* (R&B), II, p. 181
		footnote 1	footnote 2
204	14	‘izzu'd Din	‘Izzu'd Din
215	8	*sarvan*	*parvan*
215	21	*a‘rifat*	*Ma‘rifat*

Page	*Line*	*For*	*Read*
218	19	son	grandson
223	25	Hasam	Hasan
232	2	hitched	pitched
233	11	safari	safavi
234	27	died. Fighting against the Roshana’is. these	died fighting against the Roshana’is. These
246	16	foot	fort
277	8	compeast	least
281	7	(east of Lucknow)	(west of Lucknow)
281	27	mut	*mut‘ah*
286	41	hired	lived
288	19	1588-89	1569-70
289	18	1558-59	1568-69
298	16	do succeed	to succeed
307	23	(*charkh u bazi*) of these birds remind	(*charkh u bazi*) remind
309	12	emirde	empire
		hwarted, and the diverted	thwarted and diverted
338	12, 30	Hakim Human	Hakim Humam
385	30	Ilness	illness
459	19	thy	this
480	25	Rofi‘u’d Din	Rafi‘u’d Din
482	9	robers	robber
503	21	compiled	completed
506	18	po God	to God
506	19	alldgi	alleged